

# Psalm 51 Commentary

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**Psalm 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.**

BGT Psalm 50:1 ε ς τ τ λ ο ς ψ α λ μ ς τ Δ α υ ι δ 2 ν τ λ θ ε ν π ρ ς α τ ν Ν α θ α ν τ ν π ρ ο φ η τ η ν ν κ α ε σ λ θ ε ν π ρ ς Β η ρ σ α β ε ε 3 λ η σ ν μ ε θ ε ς κ α τ τ μ γ α λ ε ς σ ο υ κ α κ α τ τ π λ θ ο ς τ ν ο κ τ η ρ μ ν σ ο υ ξ λ ε ι ψ ο ν τ ν μ η μ μ ο υ

LXE Psalm 51:1 <For the end, a Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, when he had gone to Bersabee.> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of thy compassions blot out my transgression.

KJV Psalm 51:1 <To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

NET Psalm 51:1 For the music director; a psalm of David, written when Nathan the prophet confronted him after David's affair with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, because of your loyal love! Because of your great compassion, wipe away my rebellious acts!

CSB Psalm 51:1 For the choir director. A Davidic psalm, when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.

ESV Psalm 51:1 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

NIV Psalm 51:1 For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

NLT Psalm 51:1 For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins.

NRS Psalm 51:1 <To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

NJB Psalm 51:1 For the choirmaster Of David When the prophet Nathan had come to him because he had gone to Bathsheba Have mercy on me, O God, in your faithful love, in your great tenderness wipe away my offences;

NAB Psalm 51:1 For the leader. A psalm of David, 2 when Nathan the prophet came to him after his affair with Bathsheba. 3 Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness; in your abundant compassion blot out my offense.

YLT Psalm 51:1 To the Overseer. -- A Psalm of David, in the coming in unto him of Nathan the prophet, when he hath gone in unto Bath-Sheba. Favour me, O God, according to Thy kindness, According to the abundance of Thy mercies, Blot out my transgressions.

GWN Psalm 51:1 For the choir director; a psalm by David when the prophet Nathan came to him after David's adultery with Bathsheba. Have pity on me, O God, in keeping with your mercy. In keeping with your unlimited compassion, wipe out my rebellious acts.

BBE Psalm 51:1 To the chief music-maker. A Psalm. Of David. When Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba. Have pity on me, O God, in your mercy; out of a full heart, take away my sin.

- **after he had gone in to Bathsheba:** 2Sa 11:1-27 - commentary
- **O God:** Ps 25:6,7 109:21 119:124 Ex 34:6,7 Nu 14:18,19 Da 9:9,18 Mic 7:18 7:19 Ro 5:20,21 Eph 1:6-8 2:4-7

- **greatness of Your compassion:** Ps 5:7 69:13,16 106:7,45 Isa 63:7,15 \*marg: La 3:32
- **compassion:** Ps 40:11 77:9 145:9
- **blot:** Ps 51:9 Ne 4:5 Isa 43:25 Isa 44:22 Jer 18:23 Ac 3:19 Col 2:14

#### Related Passages:

Psalms 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 44:22 "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

Acts 3:19+ "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Colossians 2:14+ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

### FROM THE SIN OF 2 SAMUEL 11-12 TO THE REPENTANCE OF PSALM 51

We could subtitle Psalm 51, "From gutter to glory!" It is the summation of the great reversal from guilt of sin to freedom of repentance.

Several well-known individuals turned to Psalm 51 at the time of their death. Both Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey recited this psalm when they were on the scaffold as martyrs during the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Mary. Henry V requested it be read to him on his deathbed. William Carey requested it be the text of the sermon at his funeral. Psalm 51 is one of the so-called "[penitential psalms](#)" - Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

**G. Campbell Morgan** - This great song, pulsating with the agony of a sin-stricken soul, helps us to understand the stupendous wonder of the everlasting mercy of our God.

In a sense Psalm 51 is an answer to the promise to prayer in the previous psalm "And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me." (Ps 50:15) Indeed David has trouble of the worst kind - soul trouble!

**Jamieson** - The Psalm illustrates true repentance, in which are comprised conviction, confession, sorrow, prayer for mercy, and purposes of amendment, and it is accompanied by a lively faith.

**Title** - (For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him,) (after he had gone in to Bathsheba.)**Of David** - 18 psalms bear David's name and 8 have titles connected with historical incidents in his life.**After he had gone in to Bathsheba** - This tragic transgression set in motion a chain of evil events that reverberated throughout David's family for the rest of his life! One night of indiscretion led to a lifetime of painful heartache! Oh beloved, how we need to "think before we leap" in to sin! Sin promises pleasure but obscures the pain and thus deceives the sinner (who is not an innocent victim!).

**Be gracious** ([chanan](#); Lxx - [eleeo](#)) **to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness** ([hesed](#); Lxx - [eleos](#)) - The **ESV** entitles this "To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." To fully grasp the gravity of David's penitential spirit in Psalm 51 the reader is advised to study his sin and cover-up in 2 Samuel 11:1-27+ and his reproof by Nathan, his contrition, his confession and his repentance in 2 Samuel 12:1-18+. As an aside why doesn't he plead for God's justice? (Rhetorical of course!) He is a dead man, and he knows it. Apart from the grace of God he is through. He has had it. Even though he is the king, there is no provision in the ten commandments for kings to sin and order other people to be killed. So David knows that apart from the grace, the mercy, the lovingkindness of God, [which has the idea of pity] compassion of God, [which has the idea of sympathy] he isn't going to make it. So he first appeals to God's character. He knows his God is a God of lovingkindness, a God of compassion. He is not a God like the pagan gods around him. His God really loves his creatures. He is going to incarnate himself in a human body, soul and spirit and will be an experiential God. David senses way back then that the God he has is a God who really understands human beings. So David appeals to the compassion, the mercy of this God. He knows, as far as he is concerned, he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

**Be gracious** is a recurrent prayer request Gen. 43:29; Exod. 33:19; Num. 6:25; 2 Sam. 12:22; Job 33:24; Ps.

4:1; Ps. 6:2; Ps. 9:13; Ps. 25:16; Ps. 26:11; Ps. 27:7; Ps. 30:10; Ps. 31:9; Ps. 41:4; Ps. 41:10; Ps. 51:1; Ps. 56:1; Ps. 57:1; Ps. 59:5; Ps. 67:1; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 86:3; Ps. 86:16; Ps. 102:13; Ps. 109:12; Ps. 119:58; Ps. 119:132; Ps. 123:3; Isa. 27:11; Isa. 30:18; Isa. 30:19; Isa. 33:2; Amos 5:15; Mal. 1:9

As **Derek Kidner** remarks "The power of God's word is nowhere more strikingly evident than in this transformation." (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

It is fitting that David begins with God's grace which the foundation not only for our confession but then for our forgiveness. David's first plea should ever be our first plea when we have sinned against God for this is forever the only grounds we have on which to plead for forgiveness and cleansing. This is the plea of one who has no claim on the favor he seeks from God! Indeed, this is a picture of all of us! David further amplifies the basis of his confess is God's **lovingkindness** and His great **compassion**.

**According to Your lovingkindness** ([hesed](#); Lxx - [eleos](#)) - **Stedman** describes **lovingkindness** writing "On the basis of that unqualified acceptance, that marvelous continuing **love-that-will-not-let-me-go**, he says to God, "I am coming to you and asking now for this." Spurgeon adds "What a choice word is that of our English version, a rare compound of precious things: love and kindness sweetly blended in one -- "**lovingkindness**."

David makes no pretense of possessing personal merit but totally leans on the attributes of God to plead for forgiveness, specially on the covenant love ("lovingkindness" is a covenant word) of God. David knew he was unworthy of this love but he also understood covenant which assured him that he still belongs to God (in spite of his sin). David was like the prodigal who twice says to his father "I am no longer worthy to be called your son." (Lk 15:19, 21+) to which his father responded because of the unbreakable bond of love he had for his son...

But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry. (Lk 15:22, 23, 24+)

**According to the greatness of Your compassion** ([racham](#); Lxx - [oiktirmos](#)) **blot out** ([machah](#); Lxx = [exaleipho](#)) **my transgressions** - I like the KJV rendering of **racham** as "**tender mercies**" because it accurately reflects the fact that the Hebrew word **racham** is in the plural. David's call to blot out is a metaphor for erasing or removing writing from a book and may be an accounting metaphor. Great sin calls for great **compassion** from our Great God. All sin is "great" when shown (shone) for what it is in light of God's pure holiness and perfect justice! There are no "little" sins, for one "little sin" not covered by the blood of the Lamb will take a soul to hell for eternity! I fear I don't fully comprehend the greatness of my sin in God's holy sight. The Hebrew word for **greatness** ([07230](#) - rob) signifies an abundance, a large number and is used to indicate that which is in abundance, in this case God's **compassion**. Let us praise God for His abundant compassion! **Webster** says that **compassion** is the sympathetic consciousness of the others' distress together with a desire (and in God's case the **power**) to alleviate it.

[Roe](#) - he acknowledges these are transgressions. They are not just sins. They are not things that happened in ignorance. These are willful. The word could be translated "rebellious." He is a deliberate rebel against the known will of God, and he knows it. So he wants his rebellion blotted out. The Mosaic law has no sacrifice for sins of willfulness, or sins of the high hand [lifting your hand against Jehovah.] There is no covering for those sins, so he doesn't ask for that. He asks that God might "blot them out." God always goes first class. So David sees way back in those days that if his heart is really going to be free from guilt and cleansed from rebellion, God has to do a complete blotting out job. With an unclean heart he cannot go through the rituals that speak symbolically of a cleansed heart. Notice David says he wants to blot it out thoroughly. Why thoroughly? What has David learned about sin that makes him want to be totally clean with not one little speck left? How did David start out to become an adulterer, a murderer, a liar and a hypocrite? Class: One look. Bob: Right. Just one little dinky bit of lust! That's all. That was all it took to start the whole snowball down into the pit. He realizes now, "I don't want just a washing job, I want a thorough washing and cleansing on every spot on me. I can't trust me."

**According to** - Twice we see this important phrase. Notice first what it does not say -- not **but of**" but "**according to**". So what is the difference? The former phrase refers to a "**portion**" (Webster = "*an often limited part set off or abstracted from a whole*"), while the latter phrase refers to a "**proportion**" of God's **lovingkindness** and **compassion**, both of which are infinite. It's analogous to a very rich man who is approached by a poor person in need and he gives him a ten dollar bill (a portion of his great wealth) versus another rich man who gives him millions of dollars (a proportion of his wealth). This analogy breaks down with God, because His riches are beyond our imagination and even beyond what words can describe, but you get some sense of the what David is requesting by using the phrase "**according to**" rather than "**out of**".

**Ray Stedman** adds that "God is not a penny pincher; He does not dole out bits of mercy, drop by drop. No, He pours it out. His are abundant mercies. When God forgives, He forgives beyond our utmost imaginings. Two figures of speech that are used in the Old

Testament depict the forgiveness of God. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12+). How far is that? Well, how far do you have to go east before you start going west? You never come to west. Then God says He will "hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19+). Someone has added that he puts up a sign that reads "NO FISHING." Do not go down there and try to fish old sins out once God has dealt with them. What relief comes when we begin to understand this fullness of God's forgiveness. ([A Cry For Mercy](#))

**J R Miller**...Notice also David's thought of the mercy he needed. First, there is a simple cry for mercy. "Have mercy upon me, O God." This was his greatest need. He did not begin his prayer by asking for favors, for prosperous circumstances, for many friends. Before any blessings could count in his life—he must get clear of his sin, and must have God's mercy. The words represent his transgressions as all written down against him in the book of accounts—and he pleads to have them blotted out, erased, rubbed from the page. There is something very startling in this thought that our sins are charged against us, and that unless we get the record expunged, we shall have to meet the penalty. But the blessed truth here, is that sins may be blotted out—no matter how many or how great they are. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**Spurgeon on Blot out my transgressions.** My revolts, my excesses, are all recorded against me; but, Lord, erase the lines. Draw thy pen through the register. Obliterate the record, though now it seems engraven in the rock for ever; many strokes of thy mercy may be needed, to cut out the deep inscription, but then thou has a multitude of mercies, and therefore, I beseech thee, erase my sins.

**Net Bible** note comments on "**blot out my transgressions**"...Because of the reference to washing and cleansing in the following verse, it is likely that the psalmist is comparing forgiveness to wiping an object clean (note the use of the verb מָחָה (makhah) in the sense of "wipe clean; dry" in 2Ki 21:13; Pr 30:20; Isa 25:8). Another option is that the psalmist is comparing forgiveness to erasing or blotting out names from a register (see Ex32:32, 33). In this case one might translate, "erase all record of my rebellious acts."

**Utley** - In the ANE ink was acidic. When one wrote on a papyrus page the ink bit into the plant material and could not be erased. To erase something was a miracle of God, just like washing a dyed cloth white (cf. Isa. 1:18) was also impossible (i.e., no bleach available). Forgiveness is a miracle of God!

**My transgressions (pesha)** - This is the first of 5 uses of the pronoun **'my**' with 5 words for sin (transgressions, iniquity, sin, transgressions, sin) (cf also Ps 51:9 for two more uses). There are no excuses. No attempts to justify himself (see [illustration](#) below). No attempts to blame someone else or some ensnaring circumstance. David openly, honestly, repeatedly acknowledges his evil or as we often say "he owned his sins!" We must do the same! They are not "mistakes" but SINS! Notice that his confession is not to another individual but to God. Notice also that he does not name the specific sins he committed although the sins of adultery and murder are clearly in view (bloodguiltiness in Ps 51:14 may allude to Uriah's murder). In using the three most common words for sin, David clearly seeks to leave no stone unturned. We need to imitate David's pattern and "own" our sin, not deflect it, not rationalize it, not blame others for it, not blaming our upbringing for it, etc. We need to expose our sins to the light, to the light of God's Word, for therein we will discover in His amazing grace, there is abundant forgiveness, complete forgiveness of our sins! Thank You Jesus. Amen

**Rebellion** is inherent in this word ([pesha](#)) for **transgressions**. The English word rebellion is ugly and describes open, usually unsuccessful defiance or resistance to an established government, in this case God. An open and avowed renunciation of the authority of God to Whom one owes his allegiance. Do we really understand that this is what we do when we willfully choose to sin against a law or commandment that we clearly know? It is utter spiritual insanity! Like one person said when we act this way we are in essence "practical atheists!" **Boice** says pesha "refers to crossing a forbidden boundary with the thought that this is a serious rebellion." The 1828 Webster's dictionary says that **transgression** is "The act of passing over or beyond any law or rule of moral duty; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command.

**Perowne** comments on David's use of all 3 Hebrew words for **sin** (in his comments on Ps 32:1, 2) "Sin is here (as in Ex 34:7) spoken of under three appellations, so as to include the whole idea of sin in all its manifestations: First, as "transgression" (pesha) or departure from God and open defection from His covenant. Secondly (**Ed**: Occurs third in Ps 51:2), as "a coming short of the mark," (chatta) a deflection from an aim, a not doing of our duty. Thirdly, as including the idea of wrong doing ('avon), the guilt, and also the punishment. ([The book of Psalms](#))

**Adam Clarke** on David's 3 choice descriptions of his sins...

It is transgressions, pesha, rebellion.

It is iniquity, avon, crooked dealing.

It is sin, chattath, error and wandering

Notice that all three primary Hebrew words for "sin" (**pesha'**, **'avon**, **chatta**) are used by David to describe his personal sin in Ps

51:1-3, a section which represents the greatest statement on the nature of sin in the Old Testament. David's greatest sins did not keep God from using him to teach one of the greatest teachings on sin!

**THOUGHT** - Perhaps you think you have sinned so greatly that God could never use you! You are wrong and David is living proof of this truth! Notices that each Hebrew word implies the existence of God's standard of righteousness (all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, all that God provides in Christ Jesus - cp 1Co1:30+).

**My transgressions** - Notice the plural. **Perowne** wisely comments that "No sin ever stands alone: each single transgression is the mother of many transgressions: each is a root of bitterness whence spring many bitter branches, so that we cannot one sin without confessing many. (Beloved, how true this is in my personal experience. It is not your experience also?) ([The Book of Psalms](#))

**Charles Colson** once said that "*If there is anything worse than our sins, it is our infinite capacity to rationalize it away,*" but this was not David's problem. He recognized that the evil of sin enters like a needle but spreads its toxic roots in one's soul like an oak tree!

**C Gaebelein** quotes the following excellent summary comment on Psalm 51 from an anonymous source - Well has it been said, "So profound a conviction of sin, so deep and unfeigned a penitence, so true a confession, a heart so tender, so contrite, a desire so fervent for renewal, a trust so humble, so filial in the forgiving love of God, are such as we might surely expect from 'the man after God's own heart.'" ([Psalm 51 Commentary - Brief Notes](#))

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Here is an old Maranatha praise song that could have been David's theme song for Psalm 51. Sing it to Him as your prayer....

### [Hide me Lord, in Your holiness](#)

Every sin I now confess.  
Praise to You, forgiving LORD.  
Hide me in Your holiness.  
Hide me in Your holiness.

Take my life an offering.  
All of me to You I bring.  
Praise to You, oh spotless Lamb.  
Hide me in Your holiness.  
Hide me in Your holiness.

Hide me, hide me, hide me Lord  
Won't You hide me, hide me  
Hide me in Your holiness  
Hide me in Your holiness.

...In Your holiness. AMEN

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Marion Barry, the former mayor of Washington, D.C., who was caught on videotape using cocaine in a prostitute's room, "admitted that his cocaine problem came about because he cared too deeply, for too long, about too many other people's needs" (cited by George Will, Newsweek [12/31/90], p. 72)! In the recent trial of the Yosemite serial killer, his attorney argued that he was not responsible for his atrocious crimes because of his difficult child-hood. Thankfully, the jurors rejected that reasoning. But as you know, we live in a culture where everyone is a victim because of some psychological "disease" for which they are not responsible. But genuine repentance always accepts full responsibility for what we have done. But there is a fourth mark:

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Puritan writer **Thomas Brooks**

True penitential confession is FULL as well as free. **That confession is not sincere that is not full** Lam. 1:18-19. God loves neither halting nor mincing confessions. These undid the Pharisee, Luke 18:11. As penitential confessions are not extorted, so they are not straitened.

**Sin must be confessed in its particular species and parts; all known sins must be confessed fully, plainly, particularly, as you may see by turning to these scriptures**, Lev. 26:40-42, and 19:21; Judges 10:10; Psalm 51; 1 Sam. 12:19; 1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 26:10, 11; Da 9:5-17; Lev. 16:21-22, etc.

Some there are who **deny** their sins, with the harlot: Proverbs 30:20, "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, I have done no wickedness."

And others there are who **blame** their sins on others, as Adam did, Gen. 3:12; and as Eve did, verse 13; and as Aaron did, Exod. 32:22; and as Saul did, 1 Sam. 15:22.

And many there are who **hide** their wickedness, that conceal their wickedness, as that proud pharisee did, Luke 18:11-12. That expression of the prophet Hosea, chapter 10:13, "You have ploughed wickedness," is rendered by the Septuagint, "You have concealed wickedness;" and, indeed, there is nothing more common to a wicked heart, than to keep close his sin, than to cover and hide his transgressions. And, certainly, this is that sore disease that our first parents were sick to death of, almost six thousand years ago; and, therefore, it is no wonder if we are all infected with it.

Man by nature is a vain-glorious creature, apt to boast and brag of the sins that he is free of—but unwilling to confess the sins that he is guilty of. There are no men so prone to conceal their own wickedness, as those who are most forward to proclaim their own goodness. There are many who are not ashamed to commit sin, who yet are ashamed to confess sin; but certainly of all shame, that is the most shameful shame, which leads a man to hide his sins.

But now the true penitent, he makes conscience of confessing small sins as well as great sins, secret sins as well as open sins, Psalm 90:8, 19:12. David confesses not only his great sins of murder and adultery—but he confesses also his self-revenge intended against Nabal, and of his knife being so near Saul's throat, when he cut off the tip of Saul's garment. [Job 31:33. We are but flesh and blood, says one; it is my nature, says a second; I cannot help it, says a third; I am not the first, says a fourth; it was bad company drew me, says a fifth; if it be a sin, I am sorry for it, says a sixth; if it is bad, I cry God's mercy, says a seventh. And thus wicked men are as hypocritical in their confessions as they are in their professions, etc.]

A true penitent is much in confessing and lamenting over that secret pride, that secret fleshliness, that secret worldliness, that secret hypocrisy, that secret vain glory, etc., which is only obvious to God and his own soul. But it is quite otherwise with wicked men; for they confess their grosser sins—but never observe their lesser sins; they confess their open sins—but never lay open their secret sins. Cain confesses the murdering of his brother—but never confesses his secret enmity, which put him upon washing his hands in his brother's blood. Pharaoh confesses his oppression of the children of Israel—but he does not confess the pride of his heart, nor the hardness of his heart. Judas confesses his betraying of innocent blood—but he never confesses his covetousness, which put him upon betraying of the Lord of glory. And others have confessed their apostasy, who have never confessed their hypocrisy that has led them to apostasy, etc. Well, this is certain, that those little sins, those secret sins, that never break a sinner's sleep—do often break a believer's heart. ([Evangelical Repentance](#))

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**Be gracious** (Q2603) ([chanan](#)) is verb meaning to be gracious toward, to favor, to have mercy on. Generally implies extending "favor" neither expected nor deserved. It describes a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need. It generally implies extending "favor" neither expected nor deserved. It reflects the action from a superior to an inferior who has no real claim for gracious treatment. Thus free bestowal of favor from God to undeserving men. It often has the sense of showing kindness to the poor and needy. In modern Hebrew hanan seems to stress stronger meaning of "to pardon or to show mercy." Mercy denotes God's loving assistance to the pitiful. **Chanana** denotes the affection expressed by moaning over an object we love, the natural affection and tenderness which beasts of the animal kingdom show to their young by the several noises they make over them.

The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **be gracious** with the verb [eleeo](#) which is in the [aorist imperative](#) and thus is a strong, bold plea for God to show great concern for David, for he is in great need (as are all sinners harboring/covering unconfessed sins)!

**Chanana - 73v - Note the repetition in the Psalms - begged(1), dealt graciously(1), favor(1), feel pity(1), finds...favor(1), give them to us voluntarily(1), gracious(45), graciously(1), graciously given(1), graciously grant(1), groan(1), implore(1), implore his favor(1), implore the compassion(1), implore the mercy(1), implored(1), made(1), made supplication(2), make supplication(5), pity(2), pleaded(2), show favor(1), show...favor(1), shown favor(1), sought his favor(1), surely be gracious(1).** Gen. 33:5; Gen. 33:11; Gen. 42:21; Gen. 43:29; Exod. 33:19; Num. 6:25; Deut. 3:23; Deut. 7:2; Deut. 28:50; Jdg. 21:22; 2 Sam. 12:22; 1 Ki. 8:33; 1 Ki. 8:47; 1 Ki. 8:59; 1 Ki. 9:3; 2 Ki. 1:13; 2 Ki. 13:23; 2 Chr. 6:24; 2 Chr. 6:37; Est. 4:8; Est. 8:3; Job 8:5; Job 9:15; Job 19:16; Job 19:21; Job 33:24; Ps. 4:1; Ps. 6:2; Ps. 9:13; Ps. 25:16; Ps. 26:11; Ps. 27:7; Ps. 30:8; Ps. 30:10; Ps. 31:9; Ps. 37:21; Ps. 37:26; Ps. 41:4; Ps. 41:10; Ps. 51:1; Ps. 56:1; Ps. 57:1; Ps. 59:5; Ps. 67:1; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 86:3; Ps. 86:16; Ps. 102:13; Ps. 102:14; Ps. 109:12; Ps. 112:5; Ps.

119:29; Ps. 119:58; Ps. 119:132; Ps. 123:2; Ps. 123:3; Ps. 142:1; Prov. 14:21; Prov. 14:31; Prov. 19:17; Prov. 21:10; Prov. 26:25; Prov. 28:8; Isa. 26:10; Isa. 27:11; Isa. 30:18; Isa. 30:19; Isa. 33:2; Jer. 22:23; Lam. 4:16; Hos. 12:4; Amos 5:15; Mal. 1:9

**Lovingkindness** (02617) **hesed/chesed/heced** is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see **note**, Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises. **Vine** writes that...In general, one may identify three basic meanings of **hesed**, and these 3 meanings always interact -- **strength**, **steadfastness**, and **love**. Any understanding of **hesed** that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. **Love** by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet **strength** or **steadfastness** suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law.

**Hesed** is translated in Ps 51:1 in the Septuagint with **eleos** which is the outward manifestation of pity and assumes **need** on the part of those who are recipients of the mercy and sufficient **resources** to meet the need on the part of those who show it. The idea of **mercy** is to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need or to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable. Here the essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery. **Wuest** writes that **eleos** is "God's "kindness and goodwill toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them" (Vincent). Grace meets man's need in respect to his guilt and lost condition; mercy, with reference to his suffering as a result of that sin. ([Ref](#)) **Larry Richards** - Originally (eleos) expressed only the emotion that was aroused by contact with a person who was suffering. By NT times, however, the concept incorporated compassionate response. A person who felt for and with a sufferer would be moved to help. This concept of mercy--as a concern for the afflicted that prompts giving help--is prominent in both the Gospels and the Epistles. ([Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

**Hesed in Psalms** - Ps. 5:7; Ps. 6:4; Ps. 13:5; Ps. 17:7; Ps. 18:50; Ps. 21:7; Ps. 23:6; Ps. 25:6; Ps. 25:7; Ps. 25:10; Ps. 26:3; Ps. 31:7; Ps. 31:16; Ps. 31:21; Ps. 32:10; Ps. 33:5; Ps. 33:18; Ps. 33:22; Ps. 36:5; Ps. 36:7; Ps. 36:10; Ps. 40:10; Ps. 40:11; Ps. 42:8; Ps. 44:26; Ps. 48:9; Ps. 51:1; Ps. 52:1; Ps. 52:8; Ps. 57:3; Ps. 57:10; Ps. 59:10; Ps. 59:16; Ps. 59:17; Ps. 61:7; Ps. 62:12; Ps. 63:3; Ps. 66:20; Ps. 69:13; Ps. 69:16; Ps. 77:8; Ps. 85:7; Ps. 85:10; Ps. 86:5; Ps. 86:13; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 88:11; Ps. 89:1; Ps. 89:2; Ps. 89:14; Ps. 89:24; Ps. 89:28; Ps. 89:33; Ps. 89:49; Ps. 90:14; Ps. 92:2; Ps. 94:18; Ps. 98:3; Ps. 100:5; Ps. 101:1; Ps. 103:4; Ps. 103:8; Ps. 103:11; Ps. 103:17; Ps. 106:1; Ps. 106:7; Ps. 106:45; Ps. 107:1; Ps. 107:8; Ps. 107:15; Ps. 107:21; Ps. 107:31; Ps. 107:43; Ps. 108:4; Ps. 109:12; Ps. 109:16; Ps. 109:21; Ps. 109:26; Ps. 115:1; Ps. 117:2; Ps. 118:1; Ps. 118:2; Ps. 118:3; Ps. 118:4; Ps. 118:29; Ps. 119:41; Ps. 119:64; Ps. 119:76; Ps. 119:88; Ps. 119:124; Ps. 119:149; Ps. 119:159; Ps. 130:7; Ps. 136:1; Ps. 136:2; Ps. 136:3; Ps. 136:4; Ps. 136:5; Ps. 136:6; Ps. 136:7; Ps. 136:8; Ps. 136:9; Ps. 136:10; Ps. 136:11; Ps. 136:12; Ps. 136:13; Ps. 136:14; Ps. 136:15; Ps. 136:16; Ps. 136:17; Ps. 136:18; Ps. 136:19; Ps. 136:20; Ps. 136:21; Ps. 136:22; Ps. 136:23; Ps. 136:24; Ps. 136:25; Ps. 136:26; Ps. 138:2; Ps. 138:8; Ps. 141:5; Ps. 143:8; Ps. 143:12; Ps. 144:2; Ps. 145:8; Ps. 147:11

**Compassion** (have compassion, mercy)(07355) **racham** from **rechem** = womb ~ suggesting a connection between the place of the developing child and the strong feelings of love a mother has toward her child) speaks a deep love of one for another rooted in some "natural" bond (cp rechem = womb). Racham manifests itself as an "emotional" response to one's needs. Racham means to feel another's pain so deeply that you are moved to do something about it. Racham means to have compassion, to have mercy, to find mercy. "The word pictures a deep, kindly sympathy and sorrow felt for another who has been struck with affliction or misfortune, accompanied with a desire to relieve the suffering." (Baker) In Proverbs "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes [them] will find compassion." (Pr 28:13+) Vine adds that racham means "bowels; mercies; compassion." This noun, always used in the plural intensive, occurs in Gen. 43:14: "And God Almighty give you mercy ["compassion"]." In Ge 43:30, it is used of Joseph's feelings toward Benjamin: "His bowels did yearn upon his brother." (niv, "He was deeply moved at the sight of his brother.") Rachamim is most often used of God, as by David in 2Sa 24:14: "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great..." We have the equivalent Aramaic word in Daniel's request to his friends: "That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret ..." (Da 2:18).

In Ps 51:1 racham is translated in the Lxx with **oiktirmos** from **oikteiro** = to have compassion {used only

in Romans 9:15<sup>+</sup>) in turn derived from **oiktos** = compassion or pity which in turn is said to be derived from the interjection **oi** = "Oh!") denotes the inward feeling of compassion which abides in the heart. It represents the display of concern over or compassion with another's misfortune. **Compassion** (from Latin **com** = with + **pati** = to bear, suffer - thus literally to "bear with" or "to suffer with") is a sympathetic consciousness of other's distress together with a desire to alleviate it and in the case of God, with the ability to in fact do so!

**Racham - 39v - compassion(30), compassions(1), deeply(1), deeply\*(1), mercies(4), mercy(2).** Ge 43:14; Ge 43:30; Dt. 13:17; 2Sa 24:14; 1Ki 3:26; 1Ki 8:50; 1Ch 21:13; 2Ch 30:9; Neh 1:11; Neh 9:19; Neh 9:27; Neh. 9:28; Neh. 9:31; Ps. 25:6; Ps. 40:11; Ps. 51:1; Ps. 69:16; Ps. 77:9; Ps. 79:8; Ps. 103:4; Ps. 106:46; Ps. 119:77; Ps. 119:156; Ps. 145:9; Prov. 12:10; Isa. 47:6; Isa. 54:7; Isa. 63:7; Isa. 63:15; Jer. 16:5; Jer. 42:12; Lam. 3:22; Dan. 1:9; Dan. 9:9; Dan. 9:18; Hos. 2:19; Amos 1:11; Zech. 1:16; Zech. 7:9

**Racham** is a word conveying a greater sense of emotion and we see a beautiful example of this emotional component in Joseph's "reunion" with his youngest brother Benjamin (Ge 43:29)...

Joseph hurried out for he was **deeply** (racham) stirred (KJV = "his bowels did yearn") over his brother, and he sought a place to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there. (Ge 43:30).

**Comment:** Here we see racham reflecting Joseph's innermost being expressive of his yearning for his brother. The Septuagint emphasizes this deep guttural sense of racham in translating racham with enteron which is Greek for intestine or bowel. We've all had those same deep feelings with

**Blot out** (wipe)(04229) **machah** means to wipe, to wipe out and is often connected with divine judgment as with God wiping out all life in the flood (Ge 6:7, Ge 7:23); Amalek (Ex 17:14+), destroying Jerusalem (2 Ki 21:13); threatening to wipe out Israel's name (Dt. 9:14). Ps. 51:1 = "blot out my transgressions"; Ps. 51:9 = "blot out all my iniquities." Ps 69:28 = "May they **be blotted out** of the book of life." The first OT use gives us a good sense of the meaning of machah when Jehovah says "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land." (Ge 6:7) God says He will "utterly **blot out**" the memory of Amalek (Dt 25:19). Note that erasures on ancient leather scrolls were made by washing or sponging off the ink rather than blotting. "**Wipe out**" is therefore more accurate for the idea of expunging. When God did move in judgment, he wiped Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down (2Ki 21:13). During the time of the Judges, the entire tribe of Benjamin was almost blotted out (Jdg 21:17<sup>+</sup>). **Mahah** figures prominently in the prayer in which Moses begged God to forgive the sin Israel incurred when they worshipped the golden calf. "If not, **blot me out** of your book," prays Moses (Ex 32:32, 33). In Numbers we read "The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll (having to do with the Law of Jealousy - Nu 5:11-31+), and he shall **wash** them **off** into the water of bitterness. (Nu 5:23+)

Uteley - usually this VERB is used of destroying sinners (cf. Ps. 9:5; 69:28; 109:13) from life and the book of life (cf. Ex 32:32-33; see [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TWO BOOKS OF GOD](#))

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates the Hebrew verb **mahah** in Ps 51:1 with **exaleipho** meaning to remove so as to leave not a trace! Because of the efficacious, once for all, propitiatory, atoning work of Christ on the Cross, believers can boldly approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16<sup>+</sup>). I say "**boldly**" because both the Hebrew and Greek verbs are in the **imperative mood** (commands)! Peter uses **exaleipho** in his "altar call" to his Jewish audience declaring

Therefore **repent** (**orist imperative** - command to do it now. It is urgent!) and **return** (**orist imperative** - command to do it now. It is urgent!), (Why?) so that (TERM OF PURPOSE) your sins may be wiped away (exaleipho), (What is the result of sins wiped away?) in order that times of refreshing (**anapsuxis** - from ana = again + psucho = to blow, refresh with cool air!) may come from the presence (**prosopon** = literally the face) of the Lord (From where does deep, soul refreshing come? cp Mt 11:28, 29, 30+) and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you (Acts 3:19, 20+).

This same verb **exaleipho** is used by Paul to describe the "blotting effect" of the blood of Christ (which was ultimately the foundation of David's appeal for blotting out his transgressions). Paul explains that one of the effects of the Cross was that it...

**canceled out** (**exaleipho** = "blotting out" Col 2:14KJV) the certificate of debt (our "IOU" for our sins) consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He (Christ) has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:14<sup>+</sup>)

**Comment:** To understand the word **exaleipho** is to understand the amazing mercy and lovingkindness of God. The substance on which ancient documents were written was either papyrus, a kind of paper made of the pith of the bulrush, or vellum, a substance made of the skins of animals. Both were fairly



expensive and certainly could not be wasted. Ancient ink had no acid in it and so it set on the surface of the paper and did not, as modern ink usually does, bite into the underlying layers. Sometimes a scribe, to save paper, used papyrus or vellum that had already been written upon. When he did that, he took a sponge and wiped the writing out. Because it was only on the surface of the paper, the ink could be wiped out as if it had never been present! God, in his amazing mercy, banished the record of our sins so completely that it was as if it had never been. Not a trace of them remained. Yes, our sins, even confessed ones, like David's, still reap consequences, but Christ's blood makes us forever free of the wrath of God. Hallelujah!

**Transgressions** (rebellion)([06588](#)) [pesha'](#) means transgression, rebellion or revolt against authority (rising up in clear defiance of authority), guilt (incurred by transgressing). Peshah' is derived from a root describing the breach of relationship between two parties (civil or religious). The idea of this noun is that the individual makes a willful choice to reject God's authority and hence to deviate from the path of godly living. Defection from God's standard. Peshah' is "a stepping aside from the (correct) path." Peshah' speaks of willful sin. Peshah' can be a transgression of one individual against another (Ge. 31:36; 50:17; Ex. 22:9) or of one nation against another (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1) but is used primarily to describe Peshah' denotes a willful, criminal breaking of a covenant (1Ki 12:19; Jer 2:29)

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**William Barrick** writes that several well-known individuals turned to Psalm 51 at the time of their death.

- ◆ Both Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey recited this psalm when they were on the scaffold as martyrs during the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Mary.
- ◆ Henry V requested it be read to him on his deathbed.
- ◆ William Carey requested it be the text of the sermon at his funeral.

#### **Dr. Barrick's Outline of Psalm 51**

##### **I. Confession** (Ps 51:1-9)

A. I Have Sinned (Ps 51:1-4)

B. I Am a Sinner (Ps 51:5-9)

##### **II. Restoration** (Ps 51:10-13)

##### **III. Praise** (Ps 51:14-17)

##### **IV. Intercession** (Ps 51:18-19)

([Ps 51 Notes](#))

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#### **John MacArthur's** alliterative outline...

- I. Plea for Forgiveness (Ps 51:1, 2)
- II. Proffer of Confession (Ps 51:3-6)
- III. Prayer for Moral Cleanness (Ps 51:7-12)
- IV. Promise of Renewed Service (Ps 51:13-17)
- V. Petition for National Restoration (Ps 51:18, 19)

(Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

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#### **Alexander** divides this psalm as follows...

Ps 51:1-4 Prays for pardon and cleansing, confessing the greatness of his sins

Ps 51:5-8 In utter self-abasement he contrasts the corruption of his nature with the sincerity which God desires, and expresses his confident assurance that God can and will cleanse and gladden him.

Ps 51:9-12 Repeating his petition for pardon, he supplicates for inward renewal for the continuance of God's favor and support.

Ps 51:13-17 He resolves to employ his regained freedom in grateful service, and to express his thanksgiving by that sacrifice of the heart which God most desires. ([The Book of Psalms](#))

**Charles Horne** introduces his comments on Psalm 51...

In this Psalm, composed upon a sad occasion, but too well known, we have a perfect model of penitential devotion. The royal suppliant, robed in sackcloth and crowned with ashes, entreats for mercy, 1, 2. from a consideration of his own misery, and of the divine goodness; 3 from that of his confession; 4. of God's sole right to judge him; 5. laments the corruption of his nature; but, 6. without pleading it as an excuse; 7. prays for gospel remission, in legal terms; 8. for spiritual joy and comfort: 9, 10. for pardoning and cleansing grace; 11, 12. for strength and perseverance, that he may, 13. instruct and convert others; 14,15. deprecates the vengeance due to blood; 16,17. beseeches God to accept an evangelical sacrifice, and, 18, 19. concludes with a prayer for the church.

The penitent's first ground for hope of pardon is his own misery, and the divine mercy which rejoices to relieve that misery. The riches, the power, and the glory of a kingdom can neither prevent nor remove the torment of sin, which puts the monarch and the beggar upon a level. Every transgression leaves behind it a guilt, and a stain; the account between God and the sinner is crossed by the blood of the great propitiatory sacrifice, which removes the former; and the soul is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which takes out the latter. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**James Montgomery Boice** wisely reminds us...

Let us remember that everything we do affects other people, whether for good or evil. It is not true that we can sin "as long as it does not hurt anyone," because sin always hurts someone. But it is also true that those who confess their sin find forgiveness and renewal, teach others the ways of God, and become a blessing.

(I agree with Boice's comment) A person who does not have much experience studying the Bible is likely to think that a well-known passage must be easy to elaborate. "It must be easy to teach [John 3:16](#), the twenty-third Psalm, or the Christmas story," he might say. Actually, the opposite is the case. The well-known passages are the hardest, and some seem almost impossible to expound. This is true of Psalm 51. "This is the fourth, and surely the greatest, of the 'penitential' psalms," says **Derek Kidner**. Yet who can properly expound it? **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** was the prince of expositors. He could get more out of a passage than anyone I have ever heard or read. But in the preface to the second part of his first large volume on the psalms, Spurgeon tells how he postponed working on Psalm 51 week after week and often sat down to it and got up again without having written a line. He concluded,

It is a bush burning with fire yet not consumed, and out of it a voice seemed to cry to me, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet." The psalm is very human, its cries and sobs are of one born of woman; but it is freighted with an inspiration all divine, as if the Great Father were putting words into his child's mouth. Such a psalm may be wept over, absorbed into the soul, and exhaled again in devotion; but, commented on—ah! where is he who having attempted it can do other than blush at his defeat? (**James Montgomery Boice, Psalms, 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996, 2:436**)

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**Ray Pritchard**... ([How Much Sin Will God Forgive](#))

There are three parts to this great prayer. First, David confesses his sin ([Ps 51:1-6](#)). Then he prays for cleansing ([Ps 51:7-12](#)). Then he offers a prayer of consecration ([Ps 51:13-19](#)).

**Confession.**

**Cleansing.**

**Consecration.**

"God doesn't forgive weakness;  
He only forgives sin.

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**Warren Wiersbe** says David prays three things in Psalm 51:

"Forgive me."

"Cleanse me."

"Use me."

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I like **Charles Simeon's** introduction to his sermon "True Penitence Described" on Psalm 51:1-3...

SIN is, for the most part, thought a light and venial (meriting no particular censure or notice) evil, especially among the higher ranks of society: as though the restraints of religion were designed only for the poor; and the rich had a dispensation granted them to live according to their own will. But sin, by whomsoever committed, will, sooner or later, be as the gall of asps (small venomous snake of Egypt) within us; nor can all the charms of royalty silence the convictions of a guilty conscience. View the Psalmist. He had been elevated, from the low condition of a shepherd's boy, to a throne: yet, when he had offended God in the matter of Uriah, there was not found in his whole dominions a more miserable wretch than he. Before his repentance became deep and genuine, "his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long: for day and night God's hand was heavy upon him; and his moisture was turned into the drought of summer." (Ps 32:3, 4) Even in his penitence (sorrow for sins) we may see how heavy a load was laid upon his mind. This psalm was written on that occasion: and the words before us, while they declare the workings of his mind, will serve to show us, in a general view, the true penitent. ([Psalm 51:1-3 True Penitence Described](#))

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**J R Miller**...The fifty-first Psalm tells the story of David's great *sin*. It tells of his *penitence* after his sin had been shown to him by Nathan. We see in it the *path* by which he returned to God. Since David wrote the words of this Psalm, thousands have used them, and they have become the liturgy of penitence for all who seek divine mercy.

Notice David's thoughts of God, as we find them in his confession. He saw Him as a God of unfailing love. In all the poignant sense of guilt that pressed upon his soul, there was not a shadow of despair. The moment he saw his sin—there poured upon him also a glorious disclosure of God's love. He confessed, "I have sinned," and at once Nathan said, "The Lord also has put away your sin." (2Sa 12:13) From this revealing of the divine mercy—hope came at once. Had David not seen God in this light when the sense of his sin overwhelmed him, utter, hopeless darkness would have come upon him, and he would have been lost in the gloom. Thus it was with Judas, after he had betrayed his Lord, when the terrible tide of conviction swept over his soul. He saw no ray of hope, and in his dark despair—he went out and hanged himself. On the other hand, when Peter had denied his Master, and when, beneath the grieved look of that holy Eye (Lk 22:61), a sense of sin overwhelmed him—he went out and wept bitterly (Lk 22:62). But through his tears—he saw God as a God of mercy and love, and instead of despair—hope sprang up in his soul, and he was restored, living to be a glorious apostle (Ed: Remember beloved, as with Peter, Jesus is praying for you in your hour of failure - Lk 22:32, Heb 7:25-note, Ro 8:34-note). It is most important that the convicted sinner shall see God—as a God of mercy and love—as David saw Him, as Peter saw Him.

Notice also David's thoughts of his sin. First, he thought about his sin as his own. **My transgressions," "my iniquity," "my sin,"** "I have sinned," are the words he uses. He does not try to lay the *blame* of his wrongdoing, on some other one, as our first parents did. He does not plead the peculiar *strength* of his temptation and try to excuse himself for sinning so grievously. He does not talk of his peculiar environment or *circumstances*. He does not try in any way to *explain* his fall, or to *mitigate* in any measure the degree of his guilt. He frankly takes the whole responsibility on himself. This shows the sincerity of his repentance. "He does not throw blame on circumstances, or talk about temperament or maxims of society or bodily organisation. All these had some share in impelling him to sin; but after all allowance made for them, the deed is the doer's, and he must bear its burden." (Maclaren)

An old writer said, that nothing else in the world is so much our own—as our sins. We cannot push the responsibility off on any *tempter* or on any *circumstances*. Others may *tempt* us—but no one can *compel* us to sin. There is no sin in being *tempted*—sin begins when we *yield* to the temptation. Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are—but He was without sin. We are commanded to *resist* the Devil, and we are told that he will *flee* from us. Others may *tempt* us—and the guilt of the tempter is great. But no one can *compel* us to sin. **Until we lift the latch—sin cannot enter our heart's door.** We are responsible, therefore, for our sins, and must bear the burden of them ourselves.

We must also personally seek and find *forgiveness* for our own sins. No intercessor can obtain pardon for us; we must be penitent ourselves. Christ's expiation is for sinners—but even Christ's intercession will not bring forgiveness, if we do not personally repent and seek mercy. No one can obtain forgiveness for us—for any unconfessed sin of ours. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Have mercy upon me, O God." - When Dr. Carey was suffering from a dangerous illness, the enquiry was made, "If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text for your funeral sermon?" He replied, "Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the words, **'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.'**" In the same spirit of humility he directed in his will that the following inscription and nothing more should be cut on his gravestone:-

**WILLIAM CAREY, BORN AUGUST 17th, 1761: DIED - -**

**"A wretched, poor, and helpless worm  
On Thy kind arms I fall."**

Only on the footing of free grace can the most experienced and most honored of the saints approach their God. The best of men are conscious above all others that they are men at the best. Empty boats float high, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. We have need that the Lord should have mercy upon our good works, our prayers, our preachings, our alms-givings, and our holiest things. The blood was not only sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israel's dwelling houses, but upon the sanctuary, the mercy-seat, and the altar, because as sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement. If mercy be needed to be exercised towards our duties, what shall be said of our sins? **How sweet the remembrance that inexhaustible mercy is waiting to be gracious to us, to restore our backslidings, and make our broken bones rejoice!**

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**J.C. Philpot, Ears from Harvested Sheaves.** This psalm is very suitable to the wants and feelings of every sensible sinner, for it is not necessary to have committed David's sin to have a measure of David's repentance and confessions, and of David's desires, breathings, and supplications. "Have mercy upon me, O God," he says, "according to thy lovingkindness." To ask God to have mercy upon us is one of the first cries that a convinced sinner puts up to God. It was so with the publican in the temple; and where it is sincere, God will certainly hear it "according to his lovingkindness," for He is full of love and kindness to poor, mourning sinners. How the psalmist also begs of the Lord to "blot out his transgressions according unto the multitude of his tender mercies." As our sins in thought, word, and deed are a countless multitude, of which every one deserves hell, we need "the multitude of his most tender mercies" to blot them out. We may see the stars in the sky, the sands on the sea-shore, the drops of dew on the grass, the waves rolling in upon the beach; but both our sins and God's tender mercies exceed them all. How He shewed these tender mercies in giving His dear Son to suffer, bleed, and die for miserable sinners; and how we need all these tender mercies to pity and pardon us and our transgressions. And how earnestly David begged, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." It is only the washing of God Himself that can wash us thoroughly. If we could shed an ocean of tears it would not wash away one sin; but the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. In order to make us know this, the Lord shews us and makes us feel the guilt and burden of sin, and that we can do nothing to put it away. Pardon must be His own free gift, and that every sensible sinner is made to feel.

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**David Guzik - Video** - [Restoration of a Broken and Contrite King](#)

**Adrian Rogers** - [How to Come Back When You're Down](#) - audio with short transcript

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**Warren Wiersbe** - All of us struggle with sin. Human nature pulls us down as gravity does, yet God has made us and saved us to lift us up ([1Jn 1:5-2:6](#)). There are three ways we may deal with our sins.

**Cover them.** We cover our sins with our words. This is lying-- deceiving others and ourselves and lying to God. Lies are darkness, whereas God's truth is light. When we lie, our character erodes ([Pr. 28:13](#)). When we cover sin, we lose God's light, fellowship and character.

**Confess them.** Admit and judge them--agree with God about your sin. This involves the heart and the will. Some people have died because they repeatedly, willfully, proudly and arrogantly defied the will of God. Admit you are a sinner, say what is wrong and then come to Him and name it. Confess your sin only in the circle of those influenced by it--individuals or family. (Don't become an exhibitionist with the public.) Confession brings release, freedom, forgiveness and a new beginning.

**Conquer them.** Jesus is in heaven today as our Advocate--as a Lawyer before the Father. Abide in Him, love Him, walk with Him in the light of His Word. Keep His commandments. Fellowship is a by-product of our walk with God. To love Him is to serve Him and obey His commandments.

Are you covering sin or conquering sin in your life? Confess any known sin and ask God to clean your heart. He wants to forgive you so He can restore fellowship with you ([Psalm 51:1-2 The High Cost of Committing Sin](#)).

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**William G Heslop...**

This is the hymn of the broken heart.

David had willfully sinned and grievously disobeyed. Convicted at last and fully repentant, he poured his heart out to GOD. This well known and never to be forgotten song was forged upon the anvil of intense suffering and sorrow consequent to personal sin. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

From the contrite spirit and broken heart of the sweet singer there arose a ten-fold cry:

(1) "Have mercy upon me."

- (2) "Blot out my transgressions."
- (3) "Wash me thoroughly."
- (4) "Cleanse me."
- (5) "Purge me."
- (6) "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."
- (7) "Create in me a clean heart."
- (8) "Renew a right spirit within me."
- (9) "Restore unto me the joy ... "
- (10) "Uphold me... Then will I teach ... "

This versatile, sagacious, and incomparable hymn (Psalm 51) has been repeated and rehearsed ten thousand times in the lives and testimonies of the people of GOD in all ages. It will be sung by the remnant of Israel when their King takes the throne. This prayer will be prayed, heard, and answered fully just before the millennial kingdom begins. ([Psalms 50-59](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [What does it mean that God will blot out our transgressions?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Several passages of Scripture refer to God's promise to "blot out our transgressions." In Isaiah 43:25 the Lord says to His people, "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Twice in Psalm 51, David prays for the Lord to "blot out" his sin (verses 1 and 9).

The Hebrew word translated "blot out" in Psalm 51 means "to abolish, destroy, erase, or utterly wipe away," according to *Strong's Concordance*. In verse 1, the appeal to God to blot out sin is based on God's mercy and [unfailing love](#). That request is followed by a prayer that God would "wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (verse 2). In verse 9, God's blotting out of sin is linked to David's request to "hide your face from my sins" and "create in me a pure heart" (verses 9–10).

The picture is that our sin is recorded in a heavenly book. The bookkeeper is God, and our sins are entered in a ledger in our debit column. Revelation 20:12 presents a similar picture of the dreadful [great white throne judgment](#), when "the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books." The psalmist, keenly aware of his sin (Psalm 51:3), pleads with God to erase the record of his sin and cancel his debt. As a sinner, his only hope is that God, in His mercy, will blot out his iniquity.

As Isaiah 43:25 reveals, God is the only one who has the ability to wipe away our spiritual defilement. To the praise of His glory, He is a God who forgives His children: "I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you" (Isaiah 44:22, ESV). For God to refuse to blot out transgression is a severe judgment (see Nehemiah 4:5 and Jeremiah 18:23).

Although our sins are many, God has mercy. To those who have faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, God applies the blood of Christ to our sin and cancels the debt we owe Him. Colossians 2:13–14 explains how that happens: "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by *canceling the record of debt* that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (ESV, emphasis added).

Other translations of Colossians 2:14 bring out the same truth in various ways:

- "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances . . ." (KJV).
- "God wiped out the charges" (CEV).
- "He erased the certificate of debt" (CSB).
- "Having blotted out the handwriting . . ." (BLB).
- "He canceled the record of the charges" (NLT).

The fact is that, in Christ, our sin has been effaced; no trace of it remains.

In ancient times, people hand-wrote deeds, receipts, and bills with reed or quill pens and black ink made of soot, gum, and water. When they made a printing mistake on a document (other than the Scriptures), they might choose to blot it out with ink, rewrite the letter or word correctly, and move on. The mistake had to be covered.

That's a picture of the "blotting out" of our transgressions. Our sin must be made right if we are to be fit for God's presence. The only substance that can cover our sin is the blood of God's own Son. Under the Old Testament Law, God allowed the substitution of bulls,

sheep, and goats (Numbers 29:11; Leviticus 6:25; 2 Chronicles 29:24). When their blood was spilled, it symbolized what God intended to do when He sent His Messiah to be the final propitiation for sin (Romans 3:25–26; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). With Jesus' shed blood, God blots out the transgression of every person who comes to Him in faith (John 3:16–18; Matthew 26:28). "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:25–26).

Those who have had their transgressions blotted out by the blood of Jesus are forgiven and will spend eternity in heaven with Him. Without Christ, however, sins remain a dark stain on the soul, and the fate of the unforgiven is eternity in hell (2 Peter 2:4–10; Luke 12:4–5). No amount of sincerity, religious fervor, or good deeds on the "credit" side of our ledgers can blot out our transgressions. Only the blood of the spotless Lamb of God can blot out our transgressions, erase our debits, and make us clean before God (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:13–14). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### **QUESTION - [What are the penitential psalms?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The [book of Psalms](#) is a collection of 150 poems, hymns, and songs originating from worship in ancient Israel. Throughout history, church fathers and Bible scholars have classified individual psalms into various categories according to their content, theme, and structure. One grouping known as the penitential psalms shares the key feature of expressing penitence—the psalmist's sorrow over sin and spiritual failure.

There are seven penitential psalms: Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; and 143. In each, the author acknowledges or confesses his trespass before the Lord and recognizes his need for God's favor and forgiveness. The penitential psalms make fitting prayers for the repentant sinner.

From as early as the time of [Origen](#) (AD 184—253) and [Augustine](#) (AD 354—430), the penitential psalms were set apart for liturgical use in the Christian church for the confession of sin and repentance. Medieval Pope Innocent III (AD 1161—1216) ordered that the penitential psalms be recited during Lent and Holy Week. The Roman Breviary, an ancient service book of the priests of the Roman Catholic Church, provided a special place for the penitential psalms. Likewise, the Church of England's [Book of Common Prayer](#) designates the penitential psalms as appropriate for use on Ash Wednesday and in other Lenten prayer services.

The most familiar penitential psalm, Psalm 51, has been called the Sinner's Guide. It is King David's prayer of repentance after the prophet Nathan confronted him with his sins (2 Samuel 12). David had committed adultery with [Bathsheba](#) and covered it up by having her husband, Uriah, killed. The words of Psalm 51 pour forth from David's darkest moment of self-awareness. He acknowledges the depth of his sin and guilt and pleads for God's mercy. Then, gripped with confidence in God's faithfulness, David believes his plea will be heard and answered. Psalm 32, the follow-up to this psalm, reveals that God does indeed grant David's prayer. Besides serving as a personal prayer of confession, contrition, and restoration, Psalm 51 also gives voice to the nation of Israel in its plea for repentance and salvation.

Psalm 6, the first of the penitential psalms, reveals the author in deep affliction, weary in body and spirit, and desperately appealing to God for mercy and relief from punishment. Again, the psalmist here is [David](#), who has been suffering from an illness. Trusting in God's gracious reply, David closes his prayer knowing God will hear and help him.

Psalm 38 is the prayer of an individual suffering from an illness that he views as a punishment inflicted by God. The psalmist confesses his sins and asks God for forgiveness. Similarly, Psalm 102 is the lament of an individual who is sick, suffering, lonely, and threatened by his enemies. However, in this prayer, the psalmist asks for help for himself and for Jerusalem. Psalm 102 mixes personal concerns with those of the whole kingdom and includes a hymn of praise to God.

The author of Psalm 130 neither specifies the nature of his affliction nor explicitly repents of sin. But he does express awareness of his sinfulness and his need for God's grace. The closing verses suggest that this penitential psalm is not only an individual confession but a national prayer of repentance for all of Israel.

The last of the seven [penitential psalms](#) is Psalm 143. It contains a universal acknowledgment of guilt: "Don't put your servant on trial, for no one is innocent before you" (Psalm 143:2, NLT). But this is the only reference to sin and forgiveness in the psalm.

[Repentance](#) of one's sins before a holy God is one of the major themes of Scripture, and the [penitential psalms](#) are perfect examples of the value of repentance and a firm reliance on the God of all grace and comfort. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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#### **QUESTION - [How could David be considered a man after God's own heart?](#) (See accompanying video)**

**ANSWER** - To understand why David was a man after God's own heart, we need to see what characteristics he had to qualify for such an exalted description. In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul speaks of God's feelings about King David: "After removing Saul,

he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do'" (Acts 13:22+). The answer to why David was considered a man after God's own heart is found right in the verse: David did whatever God wanted him to do. An obvious question is how could God still call David a man after His own heart when David committed such terrible sins, including adultery and murder?

We learn much of David's character in the [book of Psalms](#) as he opened up his life for all to examine. [David's life](#) was a portrait of success and failure, and the biblical record highlights the fact that David was far from perfect. But what made David a cut above the rest was that his heart was pointed toward God. He had a deep desire to follow God's will and do "everything" God wanted him to do. He was a man after God's own heart. Let's look at some characteristics of David's life to discover what that entails:

Part of why David is called a man after God's own heart is that he had absolute faith in God. Nowhere in Scripture is this point better illustrated than in 1 Samuel 17 where David as a young shepherd boy fearlessly slew the Philistine, [Goliath](#). Shortly before the duel, we see direct evidence of David's faith when David says, "'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you!'" (verse 37). David was fully aware that God was in control of his life, and he had faith that God would deliver him from impending danger. How else would one venture into a potentially fatal situation with such calm and confidence? David knew early on in life that God was to be trusted and obeyed. As we see in Scripture, David's faith pleased God, and God rewards David for his faithfulness.

Another reason David was a man after God's own heart is that he absolutely loved God's Law. Of the 150 psalms in the Bible, David is credited for writing over half of them. Writing at various and often troubling times in his life, David repeatedly mentioned how much he loved God's perfect Word. We find a beautiful example of this in Psalm 119:47-48: "For I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees." It is not hard to see his complete adoration for God's Word. Also notice how David "meditates" on God's statutes. God granted David understanding and wisdom through daily meditation. We would do well to not only read God's Word but also think about it throughout the day, for God loves us to think about Him. "Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways" (Psalm 119:2-3).

David was a man after God's own heart in that he was truly thankful. "I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O LORD, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds" (Psalm 26:6-7). David's life was marked by seasons of great peace and prosperity as well as times of fear and despair. But through all of the seasons in his life, he never forgot to thank the Lord for everything that he had. It is truly one of David's finest characteristics. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" (Psalm 100:4, ESV). As followers of Jesus Christ, we would do well to follow David's lead of offering praise through thanksgiving to our Lord.

After he sinned, David was truly repentant. [David's sin with Bathsheba](#) is recorded in 2 Samuel 11:2-5. The mighty fall hard, and David's fall included adultery, lying, and murder. He had sinned against God, and he admits it in 2 Samuel 12:13: "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.'" But admitting our sin and asking for forgiveness is only half of the equation. The other half is repentance, and David did that as well. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance to God: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!" (Psalm 51:1-2).

In conclusion, David was a man after God's own heart because he demonstrated his faith and was committed to following the Lord. Yes, his faith was tested on a grand scale, and he failed at times. But after his sin he sought and received the Lord's forgiveness. In the final analysis, David loved God's Law and sought to follow it exactly. As a man after God's own heart, David is a role model for all of us. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## The Wonder Of Grace

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. —Psalm 51:17

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:1-19

When I was a young boy, a few of my friends had fathers who led their families in daily Bible reading and never missed a church service. But I also knew that some of them were proud, tyrants at home, ruthless in their business dealings, and heartless toward people in need. Although I was young, I knew this kind of hypocrisy did not please God.

I was grateful that my father and several other men I knew modeled true faith and humility. They were quick to admit their wrongs and treated others with compassion. They obviously saw themselves as unworthy recipients of God's wonderful grace.

In Psalm 51, David expressed his deep sense of guilt and his desperate need for God's forgiveness and cleansing. As he grieved

over his sin, he came to the Lord with the sacrifice of “a broken and a contrite heart” (v.17). When David thought about God’s love, mercy, and grace, he was filled with gratitude and praise.

If we recognize the seriousness of our sin, we too will come to the Lord with the sacrifice of “a broken and a contrite heart.” As we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, taking the full punishment for all our sins, then we will be overwhelmed with the wonder of grace. —By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord is drawn to broken hearts  
And saves each sin-sick, contrite soul.  
With healing touch His grace applies,  
And makes the wounded spirit whole.  
—Bosch

Spiritual wholeness begins with a broken heart.

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## Great News!

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. Psalm 51:1

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 51:1–7

The article in the local newspaper was short but heartwarming. After attending a faith-based program on building stronger family ties, a group of prison inmates were given a rare treat of an open visit with their families. Some hadn’t seen their children in years. Instead of talking through a glass panel, they could touch and hold their loved ones. The tears flowed freely as families grew closer and wounds began to heal.

For most readers, it was just a story. But for these families, holding one another was a life-changing event—and for some, the process of forgiveness and reconciliation was begun.

God’s forgiveness of our sin and offer of reconciliation, made possible through His Son, is more than a mere fact of the Christian faith. The article’s news of reconciliation reminds us that Jesus’s sacrifice is great news not just for the world, but for you and me.

In times when we’re overwhelmed by guilt for something we’ve done, however, it’s news we can cling to desperately. That’s when the fact of God’s unending mercy becomes personal news: because of Jesus’ dying on our behalf, we can come to the Father washed clean, “whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7). In such times, when we know we don’t deserve His mercy, we can hold on to the only thing we can depend on: God’s unfailing love and compassion (v. 1). By: Leslie Koh

Father, I’m sorry if I’ve taken Your mercy and love for granted. Thank You for this wonderful gift and privilege that I don’t deserve yet You’ve promised unconditionally.

Forgiveness isn’t just big news. It’s wonderful, personal news!

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**Old Year's Resolution** - What we propose to do in the new year is not as important as what we actually do with the old year. That’s why I suggest that instead of thinking about new year’s resolutions, we should think about the resolution of the old year.

Sound confusing? Here’s what I mean. Before we make plans for our lives in the new year and in our service for God, we need to take care of any problems we still have with the old year. We should deal with unconfessed sin before we begin making new plans.

So as the old year winds down, try getting away from everyone else for a little while and have a meeting with God. Take along a Bible, a pen, and a blank sheet of paper. First, spend some time reading and meditating on Psalm 51, David’s prayer of repentance. Then write down all of the junk from this past year that you can think of that you still need to confess to God. Next, following David’s example, ask God’s forgiveness. Then, just to remind yourself that He will blot out your transgressions (Ps 51:1), take that piece of paper, tear it into bits, and throw it away.

Now you can start out the new year with a clean heart. That beats any other resolution you could ever make. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We're thankful, Lord, that when we fall  
We can begin anew  
If humbly we confess our sin,  
Then turn and follow You.



—Sper

**We have to face our sins  
before we can put them behind us.**

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**God, Be Merciful to Me**

--Richard Redhead, The Psalter, 1912

God, be merciful to me;  
on thy grace I rest my plea;  
Plenteous in compassion thou,  
blot out my transgressions now;  
Wash me, make me pure within,  
cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions I confess,  
grief and guilt my soul oppress;  
I have sinned against thy grace  
and provoked thee to thy face;  
I confess thy judgment just,  
speechless, I thy mercy trust.

I am evil, born in sin;  
thou desirest truth within.  
Thou alone my Savior art,  
teach thy wisdom to my heart;  
Make me pure, thy grace bestow,  
wash me whiter than the snow.

Broken, humbled to the dust  
by thy wrath and judgment just,  
Let my contrite heart rejoice  
and in gladness hear thy voice;  
From my sins O hide thy face,  
blot them out in boundless grace.

Gracious God, my heart renew,  
make my spirit right and true;  
Cast me not away from thee,  
let thy Spirit dwell in me;  
Thy salvation's joy impart,  
steadfast make my willing heart.

Sinners then shall learn from me  
and return, O God, to thee;  
Savior, all my guilt remove,  
and my tongue shall sing thy love;  
Touch my silent lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall praise accord.

**Handfuls of Purpose  
Psalm 51  
James Smith**

**The Penitential Psalm A THREEFOLD VIEW OF SIN PSALM 51:1-5**

**INTRODUCTION.**

1. The 51st Psalm is one of the great Penitential Psalms.
2. It has been called "The Sinner's Guide."
3. Have you ever read it on your knees? For years the Author has read this Psalm on his knees every Lord's Day morning.
4. Remember it was the prayer of "a man after God's own heart," who had gone astray.
5. It is thus the prayer of a sinning saint.
6. A whole year had elapsed between David's crime and David's penitence (Far, far too long).
7. It had been a year of misery, as Psalm 32 shows. (Psalm 32 is David's account of his experiences during that year.)
8. In mercy came Nathan the Prophet.
9. The cold frost that had bound his soul melted away, and he confessed his sin.
10. Though forgiven immediately, yet he comes into the sanctuary and wails out this hymn of agony and sorrow.
11. This Psalm repays careful study.
12. First, let us study David's view of sin.
13. Here we see how David viewed his sin after (not before) his restoration. No one can have a right view of sin until forgiven.
14. There is a threefold repetition that is very impressive. "It is not a mere piece of Hebrew parallelism. It is more than the requirements of poetical form. It is the earnestness of a soul that cannot be content with once asking for the blessing, but dwells upon them with repeated supplication."

#### **What a Man Thought of Sin who had Sinned.**

1. The very hard things that are said in this Psalm about sin, are said by this man about himself.
2. Pray remember, we have here not merely what a man thought of sin, but what a man thought who had sinned.
3. We have something more than a theological treatise.

#### **Tread Softly.**

1. And because of that we must tread softly.
2. We must handle the words with the reverent sadness with which we enter the house of mourning.

#### **Why have we Largely Lost the Sense of Sin?**

1. A young minister put this question to an eminent Christian Judge, and he replied: "Because the world is losing its consciousness of God, and when men lose the consciousness of God's existence they lose their fear of sin."
2. Fear is a very wholesome preventative in our civic and national life.
3. Men fear to break the laws of the country because of punishment for so doing.
4. When I am possessed of a consciousness of God I not only fear to sin, but fear because of sin.

#### **I. HE VIEWED HIS CRIME AS TRANSGRESSION (Ps 51:1,3).**

1. The startling fact discovered from a study of the word "sin" is that it means much more than stepping over a mark, the interpretation usually given.
2. For it is the English translation of the Hebrew word "pesha"—rebellion.
3. By Young's Concordance we find the word "transgress" in our English Bibles is the translation of several different Hebrew and Greek words.
  - a. Deceive—to deal treacherously—"Bagad."
  - b. Trespass—"Maal."
  - c. Passover—"Abar."
  - d. Rebel—"Pasha."
4. In the New Testament the words there carry all these meanings: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth (does lawlessness) the law."
5. That is the root idea in the word transgression.
6. It really means rebellion, a breaking away from, and a setting of oneself against lawful authority.
7. Transgression is rebellion against a rightful sovereign.
8. In this word we get the outward aspect of sin.

9. And this is the first view of sin in the Psalm.

## II. HE VIEWED HIS CRIME AS INIQUITY (Ps 51:2, 5).

1. Observe, he first used the plural, now the singular.
2. This is the inward aspect of sin.
3. Young gives “perversity” as the meaning of “avon,” the Hebrew word here.
4. This indicates that iniquity means that which is twisted, bent, wrung, or warped from the straight line of right.
5. To that line, drawn by God’s law, our lives should run parallel, bending neither to the right hand nor to the left.
6. “I was shapen in iniquity.” This does not mean that motherhood is a sin, and maidenhood more holy and blessed, but that the twist in our natures is inherited from our parents.
7. Sin consists not only in wrong doing, but in wrong being.
8. It also consists not only in actual wrong committed, but in the intention, the will, the wrong attitude of the soul. An aged and wealthy physician in Prussia was found dead in his bed, with finger marks around his throat, and a knife wound in his chest. His house had been plundered. Soon after an upholsterer was arrested in a neighbouring town with some of the stolen property in his possession. He made a full confession, telling how he had killed the aged physician in his sleep. But the Doctor who had performed the post-mortem examination declared that the man had died of apoplexy, and must have been dead before the burglar had broken into the house. The prisoner, in spite of his murderous intent was only punished for burglary. Under human law he was a burglar; under Divine law he was a murderer.

## III. HE VIEWS HIS CRIME AS SIN (Ps 51:3, 4, 5).

1. Young gives the Hebrew word to be “chata,” i.e., missing the mark.
2. Sin is coming short of God’s mark.
3. It seems to point out that every sin is a blunder as well as a crime.
4. “Thee only.” What is the meaning of this? Has not David made a mistake? Had he not wronged man as well as God? Answer:
  - a. Here we have the language of a thoroughly penitent man. The half repentant man fixes his eye on the humiliation and shame, on the opinion of his fellows, on the disgrace it will mean to him. But the man who has got to the heart of the matter puts men and reputation out of view, forgetting every one but God.
  - b. Strictly speaking, sin can only be against God.
  - c. The returned prodigal in Luke 15 put Heaven first, then his parent: “I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.” A sure and convincing proof of his genuine repentance.

And how this prayer was answered we shall see in our next study.

## A TRIPLE BLESSING

“Blot”—“Wash”—“Cleanse” Psalm 51:1, 2

### INTRODUCTION.

#### Opinions.

1. “The 51st Psalm is theology made luminous” (Prof. Elmslie).
2. “The 51st Psalm is the noblest expression of Penitence.”

#### What it Follows.

1. It is well to remember that this Psalm followed Nathan’s declaration of the Divine forgiveness toward David.
2. This teaches:
  - a. The revelation of God’s love and wonderful grace precedes and is the cause of the truest penitence.
  - b. The assurance of pardon, so far from making a man think lightly of his sin, is the thing that drives it home to his conscience, and teaches him what it really is.
  - c. Here is the true reason of verse 4. Pardoned, you think less of the consequence of sin, and more of the act (see Ezek. 16:60–63).

#### Mercy.

1. He appeals at once to the mercy of God before he mentions his sin.
2. Mercy is a foremost attribute of God. The Lord passed by before Moses and proclaimed: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful” (Exod. 34:6).

3. The word “merciful” in Latin is very expressive—it is “misericordia,” “miseria”—misery, and “cor” heart, i.e., a heart touched and pained at the misery of another.

**“According to,” i.e., in proportion to.**

1. Note how he heaps up these phrases.
2. “Love-in-kindness;” “multitude of Thy tender mercies.”
3. His whole hope rests upon God’s own character as revealed in His Word and in the endless continuance of His acts of love.

**Triple Blessing.**

As he spoke of sin in a threefold fashion, so he asks for a triple blessing.

**A Query.**

1. Have we here David’s cry for pardon?
2. Have we here how David thinks of forgiveness?
3. Why he was forgiven already!
4. We know that he knew very well that he was already forgiven (Psa. 32:5), and certainly he would not ask for what he already possessed.
5. We shall see in our study that he was asking for three further blessings:
  - a. God’s forgetfulness of His crime.
  - b. God’s sanctification of his soul.
  - c. Fellowship with God and His people.

**I. “BLOT OUT”—FORGETFULNESS OF SIN (Ps 51:1, 9).**

1. Young gives meaning of original as “To rub or wipe off.”
2. He deserved to be blotted out of God’s Book (Ex. 32:32), instead he asks for his sin to be blotted out.
3. I wonder if the Psalmist had Nu 5:23 in mind—the blotting out of the curse from a scroll?
4. Here David asks the Lord to deal with his sin as an erasure of a writing or indictment, as the wiping out of a record of rebellion.
5. Is this possible? We know from Isaiah 43:25 and Isa 44:22 that it is.
6. Praise God, He not only forgives but forgets.
7. And it is done because of the Cross (Col. 2:14).

**II. “WASH”—DESIRE FOR PURITY (Ps 51:2).**

1. An examination of Young’s Concordance shows that the Hebrew word “Kabas” (met with 37 times) is always used in relation to the cleansing of a garment. Another word is used for cleansing of hands and feet and body.
2. He recognises that sin, though pardoned, has defiled his soul, and now, being forgiven, he requires cleansing.
3. The garments of the soul require purity.
4. Note “Wash me thoroughly,” literally “again and again.”
5. He is praying for purity.

**III. “CLEANSE”—ADMISSION INTO FELLOWSHIP (Ps 51:2).**

1. This is ceremonial cleansing.
2. It is the technical word for the priestly act of declaring ceremonial cleansing from the stain of leprosy (Lev. 13:6–34).
3. Observe, the leper already was clean from his leprosy, but he had to be pronounced ceremonially clean before being allowed fellowship with God and Israel in Tabernacle or Temple worship.
4. David recognised that sin cut him off from fellowship with God; he is craving for restored fellowship.

**THE JUSTIFICATION OF GOD  
PSALM 51:4**

**INTRODUCTION.**

**Uncommon.**

1. This certainly is an uncommon subject.
2. The justification of the sinner is a well-known topic.
3. Not so the justification of God.

### **Important.**

1. Yet one can easily see its importance.
2. Can God be justified in all His dealings with mankind?
3. You see, His very character is at stake.

### **True Meaning.**

1. I don't think anyone will doubt that here David is anxious for the justification of God.
2. Bishop Patrick's paraphrase makes it clear: "If Thou shouldest pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me for my crimes, and execute it with the greatest severity, I could not accuse Thee of too much rigour, but must still justify Thee in Thy proceedings, and clear Thee from all such unjust imputations."

### **Unique.**

1. This is a unique illustration, and proof of a great desire for the glory of God.
2. More than desire—a consuming passion.
3. Contrast this with other illustrations:
  - a. Adam and Eve—Silent at the judgments of God.
  - b. Cain (Gen. 4:13). Here is a puzzle. Was he complaining at the severity of the judgment? Or was he admitting his case as hopeless?
  - c. Eli (1 Sam. 3:18). Resignation, but that alone.
  - d. Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:19).

### **I. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD BY REPENTANCE AND A TURNING TO CHRIST (Luke 7:29+).**

1. These were the words of the Lord Jesus Himself.
2. This is a very unusual way of putting the truth.
3. In what way did these people justify God?
  - a. They believed and accepted the message God had sent to them by John.
  - b. That message contained much that was stern. It foretold judgment to the unrepentant.
  - c. They admitted the justice of God's condemnation and accepted His offer of mercy.
4. At the proclamation of the doom of the impenitent many charge God with injustice.
5. But we justify God.

### **II. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER (Rom. 3:26).**

1. What is the message of the Epistle to the Romans? Justification of repentant sinners?
2. No; not the justification of the sinner, but the justification of God in justifying the sinner.
3. Remember it is more important that God be justified in this act of mercy than that sinners be justified.
4. If in the justifying of the sinner God became unjust, then the whole scheme of salvation falls to the ground.
5. But the Divine plan of Redemption is so wonderful that God is justified in justifying the sinner.

### **III. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH JEWISH NATION (Rom. 3:4).**

1. This is part of one great argument.
2. Here Paul is dealing with objections to the levelling of the Jew to the plane of the Gentile.
3. In doing this, does not God prove faithless to His promises to the covenant people?
4. No; and then Paul quotes the LXX rendering of Psalm 51:4.

### **IV. MAN JUSTIFYING GOD IN THE SEVERE JUDGMENTS AND CHASTISEMENTS HE HAS TO BEAR (Psalm 51:4).**

1. And for this David provides by a frank acknowledgment of his sin, and by confessed meriting of all God's severities.
2. What an example here for all to copy:
  - a. For the saved sinner, suffering physically as a result of a life of vice and sin in the unregenerate days.
  - b. For the saint suffering through the breaking of some of nature's laws.

## Psalm 51:10, 11, 12

### INTRODUCTION.

1. Three Petitions. Connected with the word Spirit, we have in the great Penitential Psalm three separate petitions.
2. Though we have the same word three times, we have not the same thought.
3. The first one most certainly stands for disposition or character; the second word stands for the Third Person in the blessed Trinity; the last some think is like the first, standing for disposition or character; but surely it stands like the middle one, for the Holy Spirit, only it gives another view of His character.
4. Shall we take them in the order in which they occur?

### I. "RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME" (Ps 51:10)

#### Introduction.

1. He desired an inward work.
2. "Renew," once it had been there.
3. What is a right spirit? Best answer to that question is the other renderings.

#### Renderings.

1. R.V., "Steadfast."
2. A.V., margin, "Constant."
3. F.F., "Put a new mind in my breast."

#### Significance of "Steadfast" Rendering.

1. I have so easily yielded to temptation.
2. Renew within me a steadfast mind, a mind steady in following the path of duty, an unyielding spirit.
3. John Bunyan, in his immortal allegory, has a Mr. Standfast, a most attractive character.

#### Meaning of Rendering "Constant."

1. Think of a mariner's compass or a clock.
2. A compass or a clock, always right and dependable, are to be prized and valued.
3. **Oh, to have a mind always set on God! (LORD, LET IT BE SO FOR ALL WHO READ THESE NOTES. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN)**

#### Right Spirit. A wrong spirit can take possession of us.

#### Renew.

1. It was once there. (cf Rev 2:2-5+)
2. Lord, put it there again!

#### "Within."

Here he desired an inward work of grace.

How Often should we Offer this Prayer?

1. More frequently than we imagine we should.
2. For our dispositions seem mercurial, as changeable as the weather.
3. The ideal is: "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."
4. The same, without sameness.
5. God alone can accomplish this work.
6. Let us present this prayer daily.

### II. "TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME" (Ps 51:11).

He Possessed.

1. David regards himself as still possessing the Spirit.
2. We know when the Spirit first possessed him (1 Sam. 16:13).
3. What longsuffering on the part of the Spirit to remain in an unclean life.

Saul.

1. Had David Saul in mind when he prayed thus? (1 Sam. 16:14).

Dispensation.

1. Is this a prayer for this dispensation?
2. Scofield's valuable note: "No believer in this dispensation aware of the promise of His abiding (John 14:16) should pray, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me' (Eph. 4:30); but, while Christian position is not bound here, Christian experience in essence is."
3. Observe the force of John 14:16.

**What can be taken away?**

**1. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THAT HOLY PRESENCE.**

- a. This is our Heaven below.
- b. We may live in the regular enjoyment of that presence.
- c. The manifestation of the Spirit is the fruit of loving obedience and watchfulness.

**2. THE POWER OF THAT ALMIGHTY PRESENCE, though not the presence.**

- a. When we lose that power we become "weak as other men," as in Samson's experience.
- b. It is the **power of the Holy Spirit** that makes all the difference between preachers and workers.

**III. UPHOLD ME WITH THY FREE SPIRIT (Ps 51:12).**

Introduction

1. Two facts attract one in this prayer—the desire to be upheld, and the adjectives describing the character of the Spirit.
2. This is the prayer of conscious weakness.

Renderings.

1. "Willing." R.V., margin, "Thy willing Spirit."
2. "Princely." Lit., "Thy princely Spirit."
3. "Free." Spirit has wonderful freedom. "Thy free Spirit."

**A Wonderful Description of God's Holy Spirit.**

1. God's Spirit is Royal and Princely in character, and communicates a Holy, and Royal, and Princely dignity to us.
2. God's Spirit is a "Willing Spirit," willing to work for and in us, and will communicate to us a willingness and an ability to do God's will.
3. God's Spirit is a "free" Spirit, imparting wonderful freedom.

**Uphold. Oh, keep me! Hold me up!**

**Application.** Thos. Waugh discovered "though he had the Spirit, he was not filled with the Spirit; though he had welcomed the Spirit as Guest, he had not welcomed him as Host." Let the Guest become Host, i.e., Lord. Instead of, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," Rotherham has, "Where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty."

**WHITE, THEN WHITER THAN SNOW**  
**Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 51:7**

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

Psalms 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**NOT SYNONYMOUS.**

1. These are not statements that mean one and the same thing.
2. POINTS OF DIFFERENCE are easily noted:
  - a. One was the Word of the Lord to Israel, the other a prayer by a king to the Lord.
  - b. The first is the Lord's promise, the second a penitent's plea.
  - c. At least 300 years separate the two utterances.

- d. The first describes the work of God when He pardons and justifies the sinner; the second describes a deeper and an inward work of grace desired by the restored sinner.
- e. This order is always observed: White as snow, then whiter.
- f. The one is righteousness imputed, the second is righteousness imparted.

3. This does not mean that the first work was imperfect. No. It was a perfect work of justification.

#### I. WHITE AS SNOW. How familiar is this statement in Isaiah 1:18. It is:

1. A Word of Authority: "Come now."

- a. Therefore it is a word that cannot be treated lightly.
- b. What is behind a command is of importance.
- c. If I say, "Move on," to loiterers in the street, they can afford to treat it lightly; if a policeman says the same, they will either have to "Move on" or "Move in!"

2. An Appeal to Reason. God appeals to reason as well as to affections, to our heads as well as to the heart.

3. An Importunate Word: "Now." It brooks no delay.

4. A Word for All. And that is so because it concerns sin.

5. A Word for the Double-dyed Sinner.

- a. Those who understand the original declare that the word translated "scarlet" here really means the double-dyed—the twice dipped.
- b. For the scarlet colour in ancient times was the result of two dippings.
- c. "But I am not a double-dyed sinner," do you say? But you are.
- d. We are all twice-dipped sinners—first in the vile pool of original corruption, then in the bath of actual transgressions.
- e. In other words, we are sinners twice over—by birth and by choice.

6. A Word Teaching the Permanency of Sin.

- a. Scarlet is a fast colour, fixed and permanent.
- b. It is the Bible colour for sin, not **black**.
- c. There is no power in chemistry that can take the scarlet colour out without destroying the fabric.
- d. But what is impossible in chemistry is possible in **grace**.

#### II. WHITER THAN SNOW.

Arctic Grave. Away in the far North, on the brow of a hill covered with snow, illuminated by the light of the Polar Star, a member of an arctic expedition lies buried. A large stone covers the dead, and, on a copper tablet at the head of the grave, this text is inscribed: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." There, amidst the eternal snows, man's passionate longing for purity finds a voice.

#### David's Mistake.

- 1. But did David not make a mistake when he prayed thus?
- 2. Surely nothing can be whiter than snow.
- 3. The fact is that the snowflake is not pure.
- 4. It seems that everything that touches this sin cursed earth is contaminated.
- 5. Elements of earthliness are wrapped up in the bosom of every snowflake that falls upon the earth.
- 6. It has been calculated that a slight fall of snow carries to the surface of the county of London alone 343 tons of solids in the following parts: 75 tons of dissolved solids, 142 tons of suspended matter, 100 tons of coal, 25 tons of salt, 1 ton of ammonia.
- 7. So this is a passionate longing after a deeper purity. Oh, for a purity as God counts purity! He who imparts the longing and inspires the prayer will grant the desire.

### A THREEFOLD JOY Psalm 51:8, 14, 15

**INTRODUCTION.** In this Penitential Psalm we not only have a threefold view of sin, a threefold blessing, and a threefold reference to the Spirit, but also a threefold view of joy and gladness.



## **Songless Birds.**

1. The Psalmist had been for a year songless.
2. No Psalms had he composed and sung, and no song could be found in his heart.
3. "When I kept silence"—suggestive phrase. He had been silent. "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long"—strange paradox.

Silent in praise, but conscience roaring—that is the meaning.

Longing for Old-Time Joy.

1. Here he longs for the old-time joy.
2. Here he longs and asks for double joy—joy and gladness.
3. Read verse 12: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."
4. Observe:
  - a. He wanted and longed for God's joy.
  - b. The joy associated with His salvation.
  - c. A joy that deepens as our salvation becomes more thorough.

## **Three Organs.**

1. David refers to three important organs—ear, tongue, and lips.
2. Each of which have to do with joy and gladness.
3. Let us take them in the order in which they are found.

### **I. CONCERNING THE EAR (Ps 51:8).**

Introduction.

1. It is notable that he begins with the ear.
2. Deafness and dumbness are associated.

Sin has a Sad Effect upon our Spiritual Hearing.

1. The unforgiven one has no ear for joy and gladness. He feels out of harmony with heavenly melody, for the great discord has entered his soul. He cannot bear or tolerate joy in others when in that sad mood.
2. How could he be expected to enjoy music when he was as a wretch with every bone broken.
  - a. For he likens himself to one whose bones are crushed.
  - b. And crushed by no ordinary means.
  - c. He groaned under no mere flesh wounds. Like some poor sufferer, he is swallowed up of himself.
3. Then sin had made him hard of hearing. Sin always does. He prays for the recovery of hearing.
4. Before joy and gladness there must come:
  - a. Forgiveness and cleansing. The sense of forgiveness is like a glad morning to song birds.
  - b. The recovery of hearing.
  - c. The mood to enjoy music.
5. Another rendering: "If you hear me I joy and am glad" (F.F.). Joy and gladness the result of the assurance of God hearing and answering prayer. What a joy that brings!

### **II. CONCERNING THE TONGUE (Ps 51:14).**

**Literal.**

1. It is clear that David has in mind the guilt of Uriah's death.
2. Uriah's blood weighed upon his soul.
3. Is there a condition of soul more awful than this, to have another man's blood resting on us!
4. Well might he be songless.

**Spiritual.**

1. But there is such a thing as spiritual blood-guiltiness.
2. Read Acts 20:26.
3. Without doubt Paul had Ezekiel in mind. Read Ezek. 3:17 to 21; Ezek. 33:1 to 9.

4. What a serious view this is of pastoral responsibility.
5. Watchmen were the police of the East, or rather, a combination of police, soldier, and sentinel.
6. Note, the watchman's:
  - a. Commissioner—God (Ezek. 3:17). Usually the people appointed a watchman, but God appointed this Watchman.
  - b. Privilege. Friendship with God. Hear the Lord's voice "at my mouth."
  - c. Self-sacrifice. Self-denial; awake when others were asleep. Self-sacrifice—sometimes to die for others.
  - d. Chief Duty. "Give them warnings."

#### **How to be Free from Blood-Guiltiness.**

1. Unwearied labour. In rules drawn up by John Wesley for the guidance of his young preachers, we have this: "Only through unwearied labour and perseverance can we really be 'free from the blood of all men.' Go into every house and teach every one therein, young and old." (He meant the house of all members of the Wesleyan Society.)
2. Declaring the whole counsel of God.
3. Warning.

#### **III. CONCERNING THE LIPS (Psalm 51:15).**

1. Praise is not easy. It is spoken of as sacrifice.
2. Only God can make praise possible.
3. How does God unlock the lips? By way of the heart. For praise is the employment of happy and thankful hearts.
4. It was sin that closed his lips; God would open them by dealing satisfactorily with his sin.

#### **CONCLUSION.**

1. **Sometimes it happens that the older we get the more songless we become.**
2. **Should this be so? (O LORD, DELIVER ME FROM A SONGLESS END. IN JESUS' MIGHTY HEALING, RESTORING NAME. AMEN!)**

### **THE PROBLEM IN THE PENITENTIAL PSALM** **Psalm 51:16–19**

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

##### **A Problem.**

1. These verses present several problems for solution.
2. What affinity has Ps 51:18 and 19 with the rest of the Psalm? Have they never grated upon your spiritual senses? Have you never felt a jar upon your spiritual sensibilities when you reached them? You are confessing sin and unworthiness and pleading with the Heavenly Father for soul fitness and spiritual equipment, when you come smack up against Zion and bricks and mortar. What has the blotting out of sin and sanctification of the soul to do with the Walls of Jerusalem? Why, this sentence seems an alien, a stranger, in this torrent of confession.
3. Then again, are not verses 16 and 17 in flat contradiction to the evangelical teaching concerning the Atonement. Is not salvation by blood repudiated? Does not David try to saddle God with those heterodoxical views?

**An Attempt.** Feeling the sentence to be alien, several solutions have been suggested, some of whom are very drastic, more in the nature of the surgeon's knife.

1. F.F. makes another Psalm of them.
2. Prof. Blaikie says they are a "Later Addition."
3. Dr. B. says "probably added by Hezekiah."
4. Dr. Adam Clarke: "A Psalm of themselves, a kind of ejaculatory prayer for the redemption of the captives from Babylon, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Temple worship."

**Reject.** I am not afraid to say that I reject those views. Rightly considered, we shall find they are an essential part to and complement of the rest of the Psalm. Instead of being alien, we shall find they are of the same blood and ancestry.

#### **I. DAVID'S SIN was so heinous that no provision was made for it in the Mosaic economy(Psalm 51:16, 17).**

1. "Murder and adultery were by law punishable by death; and therefore **no sacrifices were appointed** to be offered by those who were guilty of them."

2. Now read Ps 51:16, 17 with that fact in mind.
3. A murderer could only appeal to the mercy of God, as in Ps 51:1 of this Psalm.
4. Here is an interesting Dispensational fact—the taking of life is God’s prerogative which He reserved for Himself in the Adamic dispensation (Ge 4:15), but handed over to magistrates in the antediluvian (Ge 5 and 6).
5. Let us remember that that last decree has never been repealed, so that the agitation for the abolition of capital punishment is wrong and unscriptural.
6. If I was asked to visit a murderer in his cell, I should direct him to Luke 23:34–43+, and the story of David with the 51st Psalm.

## II. THE GREAT VALUE OF REAL REPENTANCE, plus the Sacrifice of the Cross(Psalm 51:17, 19).

1. Oh the importance of that little word **“Then”** in Ps 51:19.
2. What a fine description of true penitence we have in Ps 51:17.
3. Penitence alone has no saving element in it.
4. Yet only the true penitent can enter into the benefits of Christ’s death.
5. God has no delight in sacrifices and burnt-offerings for their own sake; but merely as **shadows** of the true atonement and expression of a penitent and believing heart. (Col 2:17)
6. An **impenitent spirit bolts and bars the door** against the mercy and grace of God, and makes of no value the death of Christ.
7. Of what value is the repetition of the General Confession without true penitence?

## III. THE GREAT BULWARK OF A NATION consists primarily in spiritual fitness and qualification (Ps 51:18).

1. What, think you, is the great bulwark of a nation? Not warriors and warships, but godly men and women. “Sin is a disgrace to any people, but righteousness exalteth a nation.”
2. David’s sin had exposed the whole nation to disaster.
3. David feared lest his guilt should render him as an Achan in the congregation of Israel, and therefore he concluded his penitential prayer with entreating God to protect and prosper Zion.
4. His sin had, as it were, broken down the walls of Jerusalem. Grace alone could rebuild.
5. I doubt whether our City Missions would be reckoned by many as a national asset; rather they would be estimated as a non-producing class, therefore parasites. But the fact is, they are re-building and strengthening the national wall of defence against our foes.
6. The workers are under-masons, working under the great Master-mason and Architect of the Universe. Let us build well, for we are building for eternity.

## SOUL-WINNING Psalm 51:13

### INTRODUCTION.

#### Final.

1. This, our eighth study, must for the present be our concluding study of Psalm 51.
2. And from the standpoint of workers, what a fine conclusion this is to be sure.

#### “Then.”

1. How important some little words are.
2. The first word of this verse is of supreme value.

#### Soul-Winners.

1. All believers should be professional soul-winners, carrying on soul-winning on non-professional lines.
2. Here are several important points:

### I. ITS QUALIFICATION.

1. In his Presidential Address at a Wesleyan Conference, Dr. Ritson made this statement: “The Christian ministry is the only profession in the world in which the message and the messenger are inseparable.”
2. The success of our message depends very largely upon the success of the messenger with and in us.
3. In order that the right quality might be behind the work, there must be soul adjustment with God.
4. **“THEN.”** When?
  - a. Be converted (Luke 22:31,32+). The Lord might at times use unconverted people, but that is not His usual

rule.

- b. Be converted again, i.e., restored.
- c. In the enjoyment of pardon, assurance, fellowship, purity, gladness.
- d. In the possession of Pentecostal fullness.
- e. In the practice of prayer.

## II. ITS MOTIVE.

1. **"Then."** When? When additionally indebted to God for wondrous grace.
2. An expression of gratitude for abounding mercies received personally.
3. As a great longing for others to share in the same blessed experience.

## III. ITS USUAL PRELIMINARY.

Teaching God's Ways. And what a wondrous teacher David would become. From bitter experience he could discourse on:

1. The evil nature and bitterness of sin itself.
2. The nature of true repentance.
3. The requirement in order that sin might be forgiven, i.e., Cross.
4. Encourage them to come by relating own experience.

## How we May Teach God's Ways.

1. Through the Word, noting God's ways with others.
2. Through a relation of our own personal experiences.

## IV. ITS ULTIMATE END. "And sinners shall be converted UNTO THEE."

1. Not unto a Church, or denomination, or Assembly, or system of belief, good and essential as these are.
2. **"Unto Thee."**

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## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE GREAT CHANGE PSALM 51

David had grievously sinned, and Nathan, at the command of God, had done for him what the Holy Spirit does for us. "Convinces of sin." The penitential language of this Psalm is always appropriate on the lips of a soul passing out of the agonies of conscious guilt, into the joys of forgiving grace.

### I.—CONFESSIONS.

Here it was deep and real "I acknowledge my transgressions." There was no further attempt to cover it up. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." He is conscious that his secret sin was an open insult to the name and character of God, as every sin is. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (v. 6). He feels now more keenly than ever that God looketh on the heart. Hypocrisy, like faith and truthfulness, is a thing of the heart (Luke 11:39). It is to such confessors that the Faithful and Just One gives forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9).

### II.—PETITIONS.

Where there are such confessions there will also be petitions. The vessel of the heart needs not only to be emptied of the evil, but filled with the good. His first petition is for the—

1. MERCY OF GOD. "Have mercy upon me, O God" (v. 1). Nothing but mercy can meet his case, and that mercy must be the mercy of God. No convicted sinner would dare to ask for justice or righteousness, only the self-righteous are presumptuous enough to think of this. Then he pleads for—
2. CLEANSING FROM SIN. "Wash me thoroughly ... and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps 51:2). The remedy must be as thorough as the disease. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. God's infallible cure for the guilt and pollution of sin is "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son." (1 John 1:7).
3. EXPIATION FROM GUILT. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean" (Ps 51:7). "Expiate me by a sin offering" is another rendering. The hyssop had to do with the blood of the lamb (Ex. 12:22). God's forgiveness is always on the ground of expiation. If the conscience is to be purged from dead and sinful works, it must be by "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. 9:14).
4. REGENERATION OF HEART. "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps 51:10). The remedy would not be perfect that only dealt with past sins and present guilt; the heart which is "deceitful and wicked" must be

changed. The clean heart is a new creation. It is a heart destitute of the love of sin, and filled with the love of God. It is a condition described in the New Testament as being "born again" (John 3:3).

5. RENEWAL OF SPIRIT. "Renew a right spirit within me." With the new heart comes the new spirit within us, and upon us (Ezek. 36:25–27). There cannot be the right spirit where there is not the clean heart. The hearts that were purified by faith were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:8–9). The absence of the right spirit is the evidence of indwelling sin.

6. RESTORATION OF JOY. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps 51:12). As a backslider, this joy had faded out of his life, but with the new heart and right spirit it was sure to return. At least, the way was open now for the return of this bright bird of Paradise into his life. Sorrow may endure for the night of confession, but joy cometh in the morning of forgiveness and renewal. There is a joy in His salvation, a joy that should never be lost.

7. PRESERVATION BY HIS POWER. "Uphold me with Thy free Spirit" (Ps 51:12). Now that he has been set free from the law of sin and death, he longs to be kept in this condition of spiritual freedom. "Hold Thou me up." As one who had been burned with the fire of sin, he now dreads it. Although we have had the cleansing power of His blood, we still need the upholding power of His Spirit. He is able to keep us from falling.

### III.—RESULTS.

Where there has been a decided work of grace, signs will follow. He had—

**1. A DESIRE TO WIN SOULS.** "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted (turned) unto Thee" (Ps 51:13). When, by experience, we have learned "Thy ways," we have something worth teaching; something that transgressors need to know. It is a great work to convert a sinner (Jas. 5:19–20). If God hath blessed us, it is that we might be made a blessing. He that winneth souls is wise.

**2. A DESIRE TO PRAISE GOD.** "O God of my salvation; my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness;" and again, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise" (Ps 51:15). Those saved by the Lord have a double debt to pay. They are debtors to the unsaved—to teach them His way—they are debtors to God, to praise Him. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Ps. 50:23).

## EXPOSITION BY C.H. SPURGEON PSALM 51

It is a Psalm, and therefore it is to be sung. It is dedicated to the chief Musician, and there is music in it, but it needs a trained ear to catch the harmony. The sinner with a broken heart will understand the language and also perceive the sweetness of it; but as for the proud and the self-righteous, they will say, "It is a melancholy dirge," and turn away from it in disgust. There are times, to one under a sense of sin, when there is no music in the world like that of the 51st Psalm, and it is music for the chief Musician, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth;" and this is the Psalm of penitence, and there is joy in it, and it makes joy even to the chief Musician himself.

*Verse 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

Here is a man of God, a man of God deeply conscious of his sin, crying for mercy, crying with all his heart and soul, and yet with his tear-dimmed eyes looking up to God, and spying out the gracious attributes of Deity, lovingkindness, and tender mercies, multitudes of them. There is no eye that is quicker to see the mercy of God than an eye that is washed with the tears of repentance. When we dare not look upon divine justice, when that burning attribute seems as if it would smite us with blindness, we can turn to that glorious rainbow of grace round about the throne, and rejoice in the lovingkindness and the tender mercies of our God.

*2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

"If washing will not remove it, burn it out, O Lord; but do cleanse me from it; not only from the guilt of it and the consequent punishment, but from the sin itself. Make me clean through and through. ' Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.'"

*3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

"As if the record of it were painted on my eyeballs. I cannot look anywhere without seeing it. I seem to taste it in my meat and drink; and when I fall asleep, I dream of it, for thy wrath has come upon me, and now my transgression haunts me wherever I go."

4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*<sup>1</sup>

This is the sting of sin to a truly penitent man, that he has sinned against God. The carnal mind sees nothing in that. If ever it does repent, it repents of doing wrong to man. It only takes the manward side of the transgression; but God's child, though grieved at having wronged man, feels that the deluge of his guilt-that which drowns everything else-is that he has sinned against his God. It is the very token and type and mark of an acceptable repentance that it has an eye to sin as committed against God.

Now observe that the psalmist, having thus sinned, and being thus conscious of his guilt, is now made to see that, if the evil came out of him, it must have been in him at first; he would not have sinned as he had done had there not been an unclean fountain within him.

5, 6. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:-*

Then it is not sufficient for me to be washed outside, and being outwardly moral is not enough. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts:"-

6. *And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

In that part which is even hidden from myself, where sin might lurk without my knowing it, there wouldst thou spy it out. I pray thee, Lord, eject all sin from me, rid me of the most subtle form of iniquity that may be concealed within me.

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

This is a grand declaration of faith. I know not of such faith as this anywhere else. The faith of Abraham is more amazing; but, to my mind, this faith of poor broken-hearted David, when he saw himself to be black with sin and crimson with crime, and yet could say, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," is grand faith. It seems to me that a poor, trembling, broken-down sinner, who casts himself upon the infinite mercy of God, brings more glory to God than all the angels that went not astray are ever able to bring to him.

8. *"Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot sin with impunity. Worldlings may do so as far as this life is concerned; but a child of God will find that, to him, sin and smart, if they do not go together, will follow very closely upon one another's heels. Ay, and our Father in heaven chastens his people very sorely, even to the breaking of their bones; and it is only when he applies the promises to our hearts by the gracious operation of his Holy Spirit, and makes the chambers of our soul to echo with the voice of his lovingkindness, that we "hear joy and gladness" again. It is only then that our broken bones are bound up, and begin to rejoice once more.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins,*

David could not bear that God should look upon them.

9. *And blot out all mine iniquities.*

"Put them right out of sight. Turn thy gaze away from them, and then put them out of everybody's sight."

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

Make me over again; let the image of God in man be renewed in me. Nay, not the image only, but renew the very Spirit of God within me."

11, 12. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;*

"Lift me up, and then keep me up. Let me never sin against thee again."

12,13. *And uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;*

There are no such teachers of righteousness as those who have smarted under their own personal sin; they can indeed tell to others what the ways of God are. What are those ways? His ways of chastisement,-how he

will smite the wandering; his ways of mercy,-how he will restore and forgive the penitent.

13. *And sinners shall be converted unto thee.*<sup>2</sup>

He felt sure that they would be converted; and if anything can be the means of converting sinners, it is the loving faithful testimony of one who has himself tasted that the Lord is gracious. If God has been merciful to you, my brother or my sister, do not hold your tongue about it, but tell to others what he has done for you; let the world know what a gracious God he is.

14. *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*<sup>3</sup>

I like that confession and that prayer of David. He does not mince matters, for he had guiltily caused the blood of Uriah to be shed, and here he owns it, with great shame, but with equal honesty and truthfulness. As long as you and I call our sins by pretty names, they will not be forgiven. The Lord knows exactly what your sin is, therefore do not try to use polite terms about it. Tell him what it is, that he may know that you know what it is. "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

"But surely," says someone, "there is nobody here who needs to pray that prayer." Well, there is one in the pulpit at least, who often feels that he has need to pray it; for what will happen if I preach not the gospel, or if I preach it not with all my heart? It may be that the blood of souls shall be required at my hands. And my brothers and sisters, if anything in your example should lead others into sin, or if the neglect of any opportunities that are presented to you should lead others to continue in their sin till they perish, will not the sin of bloodguiltiness be possible to you? I think you had better each one pray David's prayer, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." "And then, O Lord, if I once get clear of that, 'my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.'"

15. *O Lord, open thou my lips;*

He is afraid to open them himself lest he should say something amiss. Pardoned sinners are always afraid lest they should err again.

15, 16. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice; else would I give it:*

"Whatever there is in the whole world that thou desirest, I would gladly give it to thee, my God."

16-18. *Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:-*

You see that the psalmist loves the chosen people of God. With all his faults, his heart is right towards the kingdom under his charge. He feels that he has helped to break down Zion, and to do mischief to Jerusalem, so he prays, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:"-

18, 19. *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

Once get your sins forgiven, and then God will accept your sacrifices. Then bring what you will with all your heart, for an accepted sinner makes an accepted sacrifice, through Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.**

BGT Psalm 50:4 π πλε ον πλ ν ν με π τ ς νομ ας μου κα π τ ς μαρτ ας μου καθ ρισ ν με

LXE Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

KJV Psalm 51:2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

NET Psalm 51:2 Wash away my wrongdoing! Cleanse me of my sin!

CSB Psalm 51:2 Wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.

ESV Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

NIV Psalm 51:2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

NLT Psalm 51:2 Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin.

NRS Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

NJB Psalm 51:2 wash me clean from my guilt, purify me from my sin.

NAB Psalm 51:4 Wash away all my guilt; from my sin cleanse me.

YLT Psalm 51:2 Thoroughly wash me from mine iniquity, And from my sin cleanse me,

GWN Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.

BBE Psalm 51:2 Let all my wrongdoing be washed away, and make me clean from evil.

RSV Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

NKJ Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

ASV Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

DBY Psalm 51:2 Wash me fully from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

BHT Psalm 51:4 (harBĒ) [hereb] KaBBüsĕnî mē`áwōnî ū|mĕHa††ā`tî †ahárĕnî

NIRV Psalm 51:2 Wash away all of the evil things I've done. Make me pure from my sin.

RWB Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

- **Wash:** Ps 51:7 Eze 36:25 Zec 13:1 1Co 6:11 Heb 9:13,14 10:21,22 1Jn 1:7-9 Rev 1:5 7:14
- **cleanse:** Ps 51:7 19:12

## **THE FILTHINESS OF SIN! IT MAKES US DIRTY IN GOD'S EYES!**

Sin defiles our entire person, making us "dirty" from the inside out! If we really understood sin the way God sees sin and understood the defiling character of sin, we would hopefully be less likely to deliberately sin against God.

**THOUGHT** - Man's problem, my problem, is that we don't see sin the way God sees sin. Lord open the eyes of our heart to see sin and the effects of sin the way you see it. Amen.

Note the symmetrical presentation of David's requests...

**Blot out** (Ps 51:1)

**Wash** (Ps 51:2)

**Cleanse** (Ps 51:2)

**Purify** (Ps 51:7)

**Wash** (Ps 51:7)

**Blot out** (Ps 51:9)

**Roe** - David also realizes that this blotting out has to be done by a "washing and a cleansing." He is dirty. He feels guilty. He has felt guilt for some time. It is getting dirtier and dirtier, and the dirtier he feels, the more estranged and alienated he feels from a God who is Holy. The primary attribute of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is not love. It is not grace. It is not mercy. It is holiness. The word of God to mankind is, "Be ye holy for I am holy." Now it does not say God is lopsided. It does say, however, that the fact that God is a holy God is over and above all others the issue in dealing with mankind. God cannot deal with us on any other basis than his holiness. He does not wink at sin. He cannot wink at sin. He says, "I cannot deny myself." He is not like the pagan gods who do anything. Our God is constrained by his character. And the chief attribute of his character as he reveals it is holiness. So everything that God does must be done in the context of his holiness. If he is to have mercy, lovingkindness, compassion and grace toward David, he must first deal with his holiness. So David realizes there has to be a washing and a cleansing of him by God or he is a dead man....There is no way I can describe God except as God describes himself. He "...dwells in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see." That is describing Jesus Christ in context of 1 Timothy 6:16. I think of light as being bright; it is clean; it exposes; it reveals. There are no shadows in it. That's how I think of God's holiness. It is an infinite light, everything wide open, nothing concealed, totally penetrating every nook and cranny of my being and laying it out for what it is. There is no hiding. I can't turn down the light. I kind of think of it in that way....He has been revealing himself, and he wants us to reveal ourselves. That is why the Christian life is a life of transparency. We ought to be a transparent people. That is why we try to encourage things like body life, but it is difficult. We tend to hide our tremendous needs behind a facade because we don't want to let on how needy we really are.



That is exactly the opposite of God. God just displays himself in the Scriptures, and that is what God wants from us.

**Wash** (*kabac/kabas*) **me thoroughly from my iniquity** (*'avon*) - Note that **wash** and **thoroughly** are both verbs and both are imperatives in the Hebrew. The literal is awkward to render into English, the word **thoroughly** being first in the original Hebrew. It could be rendered something like "multiply to wash me" (Barnes OT Commentary and C H Spurgeon). David pleads for and pictures divine forgiveness using three verbs (actually 4 if one counts "thoroughly") - **blot out, wash and cleanse**. The metaphor of washing is that of the ancient mode of laundering clothes which would be soaked, soaped, beat, wrung out, and rinsed. David pictures himself as dirty, polluted clothing in need of a deep, cleansing washing. **Thoroughly** in English means fully, completely, carried through to completion, taking care about detail, being complete in all respects, all of these ideas serving to help us understand the degree of washing David is asking of God.

Man's way of dealing with sin is denial or defense.

God's way is declaration.

-- Larry R Moyer

**Boice** says '**avon** means "perversion" and refers to what we usually call "original sin" or the "depravity" of our natures. Significantly, it is the word used in the first part of verse 5, in the phrase "sinful from birth."

This washing is, of course, to be understood in a moral sense, meaning that they should put away their sins. Sin is represented in the Scriptures as defiling or polluting the soul (Ezek. 20:31; 23:30; Hos. 5:8; 9:4); and the removal of it is represented by the act of washing (Ps. 51:2; Jer. 4:14; Job 9:30; 1Co 6:11; Heb 10:22; 2Pe 2:22; Rev 1:5; 7:14) Wash in the OT is used predominately in Leviticus for ritual purification

**Barnes** explains that David's call for cleansing is a plea to "Remove it entirely. Make me wholly pure. In what manner he hoped that this would be done is shown in the following portions of the psalm. It was (a) by forgiveness of the past, Ps 51:9,10 (b) by making the heart pure and holy through the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, Ps 51:10, 11.

**Thoroughly** (*rabah*) means to multiply, to become numerous, to become (or make) great or large (enlarge, increase). The idea David is conveying to wash me over and over and over. **Adam Clarke** "Wash me again and again,—cause my washings to be multiplied." My stain is deep; ordinary purgation will not be sufficient.

The child of God may lapse into sin and he loathes it.

The child of the devil leaps into sin and he loves it.

-- Adrian Rogers

**Adrian Rogers** on **wash me** - Sin soils his soul. David says, "Wash me; cleanse me." Now, why did David do that? Well, he felt dirty. He's not dirty physically. He's a king. He bathed in his lavish marble tub. He slept on his silky sheets. He wore his royal robes. And yet he feels grimy. He feels filthy. He feels dirty. Did you know that's one way that you can know that you are saved? Not whether or not you can sin—but does your sin make you feel dirty? You see, there's a difference between a child of God and a child of the devil. The child of a devil sins and it doesn't bother him. He may take God's name in vain, and you rebuke him; and he says, "What did I say?" or "What's wrong with that?" He has no difficulty with sin. There's a difference between a child of God and a child of Satan. It's just like a pig that wallows in the mud. Did you know that no pig has ever felt dirty? No pig has ever said, "Woe is me! I'm a dirty pig!" A sheep may fall in the mud, and wants to get out. But the pig just lies there, because that's the pig's nature. The pig doesn't feel dirty. The difference between a child of God and a child of the devil is this: The child of God may lapse into sin and he loathes it. The child of the devil leaps into sin and he loves it. ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**Mattoon** comments **wash me thoroughly** is literally..."Multiply to wash me." The word rendered "**thoroughly**" is from the Hebrew word **rabah**. It is a verb, either in the infinitive or imperative mood, and suggests the idea of "multiplying" or "increasing." The reference is to that which might need constant or repeated washing in order to remove a stain. This verb indicates intensity or thoroughness. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore David basically cries, "Multiply to wash me! The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson stain is ingrained, but Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left.

**Spurgeon** on "**Wash me thoroughly.**" It is not enough to blot out the sin; his person is defiled, and he fain would be purified. He would have God himself cleanse him, for none but he could do it effectually. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore he cries, "**Multiply to wash me.**" The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson is ingrained: but, Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left. The hypocrite is content if his garments be washed; but the true suppliant cries, "wash me." The careless soul is content with a nominal cleansing, but the truly-awakened conscience desires a real and practical washing, and that of a most complete and efficient kind. ([Psalm 51](#))

**J R Miller**..."Wash away all my iniquity." Sin is represented as leaving a stain, and the prayer is that it may be washed off. That is, sin not only writes its record against us on God's book—but it also defiles and pollutes our lives. We need not only to have the guilt removed—to be justified; but we need also to have our lives cleansed—to be sanctified. We need a cleansing which reaches the very center of the being. The stains are deep, and the purifying process must go on until they are all removed. The ancient method of washing clothes was by beating or treading, and David asks God even to tread him down if necessary to remove the foul spots. We should pray God to wash us until every stain is taken away, however painful the process must be (cp Ps 119:67, Ps 119:71). ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**Wiersbe** - In the Jewish society of that day, to wash and change clothes marked a new beginning in life (Gen. 35:2; 41:14; 45:22; Ex. 19:10, 14), and David made such a new start (2Sa 12:20).

**John Donne** spoke of spiritual cleansing "Sleep with clean hands, either kept clean all day by integrity or washed clean at night by repentance.

**Roy Hession** noted that one of the dominant themes of the great awakening in East Africa was a constant cleansing from sin which prompted him to write "We do not lose peace with God over another person's sin, but only over our own. Only when we are willing to be cleansed, will we have His peace." ([Calvary Road](#))

**Norman Grubb** had these thoughts about the revival in East Africa (in his preface to the Calvary Road)...I am sure from my own experience, as well as from what we have seen in the ranks of our Mission these last three years, that what the authors tell us about in these pages is one of God's vital words to His worldwide church today. For long I had regarded revival only from the angle of some longed for, but very rare, sudden outpouring of the Spirit on a company of people. I felt that there was a missing link somewhere. Knowing of the continuing revival on a certain mission field and because it was continuing and not merely sudden and passing, I long felt that they had a further secret we needed to learn. Then chance came for heart to heart fellowship with them, first through one of our own missionary leaders whose life and ministry had been transformed by a visit to that field, and then through conferences with some of their missionaries on furlough and finally through the privilege of having two of the native brethren living for six months at our headquarters. From them I learned and saw that revival is first personal and immediate. It is the constant experience of the simplest Christian who "walks in the light," but I saw that walking in the light means an altogether new sensitiveness to sin, a calling things by their proper name of sin, such as pride, hardness, doubt, fear, self-pity, which are often passed over as merely human reaction. It means a readiness to "break" and confess at the feet of Him who was broken for us, for the Blood does not cleanse excuses, but always cleanses sin, confessed as sin: then revival is just the daily experience of a soul full of Jesus and running over. ([Calvary Road](#))

**And cleanse me from my sin** - **Cleanse** is the idea of purifying in order to approach the altar or to participate in worship at the Tabernacle.

**J R Miller**..."Cleanse me from my sin." It is the language used of cleansing lepers. The word "wash" refers to garments and surface stains, and the word "cleanse" refers to sin as a disease, a leprosy in the soul. This prayer, therefore, is for the cleansing of the very nature. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**Barrick** concludes that this compilation of verbs, blotting, washing, cleansing "look at the totality and absoluteness of divine forgiveness. Note the reverse order of the same three terms in Ps 51:7-9."

**R C Sproul** has an interesting note...Historically, there has been considerable debate about **attrition** and **contrition** in repentance and forgiveness. **Attrition** is a "*repentance*" motivated primarily by fear of punishment. It clings to the mercy of God as a ticket out of hell, an escape from punitive wrath. **Contrition** produces genuine sorrow for having offended God. The New Testament calls us to be **contrite** in order to receive the forgiveness of God. The spirit of genuine contrition may be best illustrated by Psalm 51:2-4. Here the confession is pointed. There is no attempt by the psalmist to minimize his guilt or to deprive God of the right to judge him. He concludes with the following declaration (Ps 51:16, 17) Indeed, God does not despise brokenness. His response to contrite penitence is forgiveness. (**Renewing your Mind**)

**Eddie Rasnake** adds that...God knows we need to confess our sin. Unless we agree with Him that our actions are wrong, we will never be able to put them behind us. What qualified David as a man after God's own heart is not the absence of sin in his life—no one but Jesus ever accomplished that. David's heart for God was seen in his brokenness and repentance over his sin. He wanted more from God than to escape the consequences. He prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). We come to God in confession after our sin, not just to be forgiven, but also that we may be cleansed and restored... Remember, don't go looking for something to confess; instead, ask God to search your heart and bring to your mind anything that needs to be dealt with. Be willing to recognize any hiding of sin or blaming of others... Pray for God to work in your life

by helping you to be honest with Him and to keep short accounts with Him regarding your sin... If we don't confess, we will either hide our sin or blame others for it, but God still knows. ([How To Develop A Quiet Time- A Forty-Day Journey](#))

[Utley](#) - There are several terms for human rebellion against God found in this strophe.

1. transgression, Ps. 51:1,3 – BDB 833, cf. Isa. 59:12-13; Amos 5:12; Micah 1:5 (twice), 13; its basic meaning is to revolt or rebel against God
2. iniquity, Ps. 51:2,5,9 – BDB 730, cf. Ps. 32:5 (thrice), used often in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; its basic meaning is "guilt" or "punishment of iniquity"
3. sin, Ps. 51:2,9,13 – BDB 308, cf. Ps. 32:5 (twice), its basic meaning is to "miss"; the basic root is often used of a "sin offering"
4. evil, Ps. 51:4 – BDB 948 II, very common word, cf. Ps. 5:4; 7:4,9; 10:6,15; 23:4; 34:13,14,16; 36:4; 37:27; 41:5; 49:5; 52:3; 54:5, etc
5. One can tell how important a concept is to a culture/language by how many terms are used to communicate or clarify the concept. Hebrew has many words for sin/rebellion against God (as well as words and phrases denoting forgiveness).

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**Wash** ([03526](#)) (**kabac/kabas**) means to make clean by treading, kneading and beating clothes in cold water. Kabac was always used of clothing, "to launder" and never of "washing" the body. Most uses of **kabac** have to do with washing of clothes which have become contaminated in one way or another (28x). Particularly important contaminants would be leprosy. **Derek Kidner** notes that the verb **kabac/kabas** is "normally connected with the laundering of clothes, as if David is comparing himself to a foul garment needing to be washed and washed. The thought is still primarily of the guilt that makes him unfit for God's presence or God's people (cf. the potent object-lessons in Lev. 15). He will dwell on the more inward aspect of cleansing in Ps 51:6-12. (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Kabac/kabas** - 48x in OT - Ge 49:11; Ex 19:10, 14; Lev 6:27; 11:25, 28, 40; 13:6, 34, 54, 55, 56, 58; 14:8, 9, 47; 15:5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 17, 21, 22, 27; 16:26, 28; 17:15, 16; Nu 8:7, 21; 19:7 8, 10, 19, 21; 31:24; 2Sa 19:24; 2Ki 18:17; Ps 51:2, 7; Isa 7:3; 36:2; Jer 2:22; 4:14; Mal 3:2

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **kabac/kabas** with the verb **pluno** which means to wash something other than a body part, such as washing of clothes. Pluno for example describes the saints in heaven as those who "have **washed** their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14) clearly speaking of spiritual cleansing which is David's desire also.

**Iniquity** (punishment, guilt) ([05771](#)) '**avon** from verb 'avah = to bend, twist, distort) describes the iniquity, evil, punishment or guilt which is associated with a twisting of the standard or deviation from it. **Avon** is the Hebrew word which most distinctly unites sins of all kinds with their penal consequences. Avon is not only the iniquity but can also indicate the guilt that results from the act. Since there is a deliberate twisting or perverting, 'avon describes sin that is particularly evil. It may also describe the punishment or disaster that befalls those who practice wickedness. 'Avon also describes a conscious twisting or distorting as implied by the fact that David says "I kept myself from my iniquity." (2Sa 22:24) Israel made a choice to return to the sins of her ancestors (Jer. 11:10; 13:22). The punishment that goes with this deliberate act as a consequence is indicated by the word also (Ge 4:13; Isa 53:11). This word for sin can also indicate the guilt that results from the act of sin as implied in Moses' prayer in Nu 14:19.

In Pr 5:22 Solomon warns (and sadly failed to heed his own warning - see 1Ki 11:1-11) of the captivating power of '**avon** - "His own iniquities (**'avon**) will capture (Heb - **lakad** = catch in a net, trap or pit, figuratively of entrapment of men caught in snares laid by enemies as in Jer 5:26; 18:22; Ps 35:8; Lxx translates lakad with verb **agreuo** used in " hunting or fishing = to take, catch; figuratively of taking advantage of someone in an unguarded moment, seeking to catch them in a mistake, try to get them to make a wrong statement as in Mk 12.13) the wicked, and he will be held (Heb = **tamak** = basic idea = "grasping securely!") with the cords of his sin (**chattat/chattath**)."

The first use of '**avon** is interesting - (Ge 4:13) "And Cain said to the LORD, "My **punishment (Lxx = aitia** = speaks of a legal formal charge or the ground for accusation - Acts 23:28, 25:18) is too great to bear!" 'Avon has a similar since in the passage in which Edom was condemned for not helping Israel in the time of Israel's punishment (Ezek. 35:5). 'Avon describes the Levites who had to bear the punishment of their iniquity because they strayed from following the Lord (Ezek. 44:10, 12 - '**avon** = **punishment for their iniquity**).

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Have you been reproved by the Word of God (2Ti 3:13 "All Scripture is... profitable for... reproof"), by the preaching of God's Word (2Ti 4:2 "preach the Word... reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patient and instruction)

**1. Confess your sin, making this your lifestyle, your constant practice**(1 John 1:9 where confess is in the **present tense** = calling for this to be our habitual practice). Agree with God that what you have done is wrong.

And don't reserve your confession for just the "big sins" but be sensitive to the conviction of the Spirit prompting you to confess the "little sins" because before a holy God all sins are "big sins."

**2. Take responsibility for your sin just as David did.** You cannot blame anyone else. You made the choice to do what you did.

**3. Thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ** which cleanses you from all sin, and accept in faith His forgiveness. Remember that forgiveness is the basis of grace, not merit. Remember that God's forgiveness is based on His love and compassion, not on our worthiness.)

**4. Take God at His Word.** No matter how you feel, cling in faith to what God says. Don't allow the accuser, Satan, to rob you of your victory.

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### "I'm . . . Uh . . . Sorry"

Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. —Psalm 51:1-2

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:1-17

The news is quick to report all the details of famous people's wrongdoings and their subsequent confessions. Perhaps it's an athlete who was arrested for driving while drunk. Or it could be a politician caught in an indiscretion. Only God knows the heart, but when we hear a stuttered "I'm . . . uh . . . sorry," we may wonder if they are truly repentant or just sorry they got caught.

When we read the confession of the famous King David we see what looks like genuine contriteness. In his public discussion of his sins in Psalm 51, this disgraced monarch—who had an embarrassing record of flagrant sins which he had kept hidden (2Sa 12:1-13; Ps 32:3-5)—pleads for mercy.

He recognized that his sin was an affront to God—not just to people—and that God alone can judge him (Ps. 51:1-6). He realized that he must be cleansed by God (Ps 51:7-10), and he celebrated his restoration through service and worship (Ps 51:11-17).

All of us sin and fall short of God's glory. When we feel the heavy burden of sin weighing us down, we have the blessing of confession and forgiveness (1 John 1:9) to lift us up. Isn't it just like our great God to turn even our sins into an opportunity to grow in His grace and power and love By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, please give me a humble heart and the courage to confess my sins before You and others. Thank You for Your promise to be faithful to forgive my sins and to cleanse me.

Confession is agreeing with God about our sin.

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### Honest Evangelism

Cleanse me from my sin. . . . Then I will teach transgressors Your ways. — Psalm 51:2,13

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51

If Christians were more honest about their own sinfulness, they would be more effective in reaching nonbelievers for Christ.

Philip Yancey told of a prostitute, sick and without food, who asked an inner-city Christian worker for help. When he suggested that she should go to a church, she replied, "Church! Why would I go there? They'd make me feel worse than I already do!"

We who go to church regularly tend to put on a happy face or look pious on Sunday morning. This may give the impression that we never struggle with temptation or fall short of the high standard we profess. No wonder many street people or down-and-outers who visit church get the feeling that they are the only bad ones there.

This is not to suggest that we should make public all our sinful thoughts and actions. Rather, the solution to this situation begins with total honesty about ourselves like that expressed by David in Psalm 51. If we admit to ourselves our own sinful tendencies and recognize our own capacity for evil, we will not convey a holier-than-thou attitude. Down-and-out sinners will sense this, and God will then be able to use us to "teach transgressors [His] ways" (Ps. 51:13). By: Herbert Vander Lugt

Lord Jesus, help us to be honest about our sin and our need of Your grace. Help us to be the kind of people who draw others to You.

To know the potential for sin in our own heart gives us a more sympathetic heart for sinners.

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**A Clear Conscience** - In 1971 he killed a man. Even though he was the prime suspect in the murder, no one could prove it and the case was abandoned. So, he got away with it. Or did he?

Nearly three decades later, in failing health and living in a nursing home, he confessed to the crime. A detective who headed the original investigation said, "He was looking over his shoulder for the last 26 years, not only for the law, but for his Maker. I think he wants to clear his conscience before he meets his Maker—or try to at least."

How's your conscience today? Clear or clouded? What would it take to be ready to meet your Maker? How can you be made clean?

It may seem strange to speak of blood as a cleansing agent, but that's how the Bible connects the death of Jesus on the cross to our standing before God (Heb. 10:19). Christ shed His blood so that we might be forgiven and made clean inside. Because of what He has done, we can have a clear conscience and "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (He 10:22).

No matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus Christ can give you a clear conscience. Why not confess your sin and make things right with your Maker today. — by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Now in His mercy He waits to impart  
Peace to the conscience and joy to the heart,  
Waits to be gracious, to pardon and heal  
All who their guilt and their sinfulness feel.  
—Anon.

**A clear conscience  
is a soft pillow.**

**Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.**

BGT Psalm 50:5 τὴν νόμον μου γίνωσκω καὶ μαρτὰ μου ἐπινοῶ σὺν δὲ πάντῃ

LXE Psalm 51:3 For I am conscious of mine iniquity; and my sin is continually before me.

KJV Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

NET Psalm 51:3 For I am aware of my rebellious acts; I am forever conscious of my sin.

CSB Psalm 51:3 For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me.

ESV Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

NIV Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

NLT Psalm 51:3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night.

NRS Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

NJB Psalm 51:3 For I am well aware of my offences, my sin is constantly in mind.

NAB Psalm 51:5 For I know my offense; my sin is always before me.

YLT Psalm 51:3 For my transgressions I do know, And my sin is before me continually.

GWN Psalm 51:3 I admit that I am rebellious. My sin is always in front of me.

BBE Psalm 51:3 For I am conscious of my error; my sin is ever before me.

RSV Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

NKJ Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.

ASV Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions; And my sin is ever before me.

DBY Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is continually before me.

BHT Psalm 51:5 Kîl-pûšâ`ay `ânî `êdâ` wûHa††ă`tî negDî tāmîd

NIRV Psalm 51:3 I know the lawless acts I've committed. I can't forget my sin.

RWB Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

WEB Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin {is} ever before me.

- **For I:** Ps 32:5 38:18 Lev 26:40,41 Ne 9:2 Job 33:27 Pr 28:13 Lu 15:18-21
- **my sin:** Ps 40:12 Isa 59:12 Jer 3:25

## A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ONE'S SIN AGAINST GOD

**For** Term of explanation. David is not giving the reason God should forgive him but the reason why he is begging for forgiveness - he is very acutely aware of his transgressions and sins and in acute need of divine forgiveness! **Barnes** adds that "The word "for" does not imply that he referred to his willingness to confess his sins as an act of merit, but it indicates a state of mind which was necessary to forgiveness, and without which he could not hope for pardon."

**THOUGHT-** When I sin, do I truly comprehend the greatness of my sin against God and thus the greatest of my need to be forgiven by God? I think far too often this truth does not cross my mind, to my great shame!

**Wiersbe** - If we really understood what **sin** *is* and what **sin** *does*, it would keep us from **deliberately sinning** against God. But we don't see **sin** the way He does.

**Charles Horne** comments that...The penitent's second plea for mercy is, that he doth not deny, excuse, or palliate his fault, but confesses it openly and honestly, with all its aggravations, truly alleging that it haunts him night and day, causing his conscience incessantly to reproach him with his base ingratitude to a good and gracious Father. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**Jamieson** rightly reminds us that...Conviction precedes forgiveness; and, as a gift of God, is a plea for it (2Sa 12:13; Ps 32:5; 1Jn 1:9).

**I know** ([yada](#); Lxx - [ginosko](#)) **my transgressions** ([peaha](#)) - **CSB** = "I am conscious of my rebellion." **NET** - "I am aware of my rebellious acts." The Hebrew word "[yada](#)" speaks of intimate knowledge. The **Lxx** uses [ginosko](#) in the present tense indicating that David continually knew about or was continually conscious of his rebellious acts against God. In other words, David had a continual conscious awareness of his wanton rebellion against God during that dark time (estimated at from 6-9 months based on Bathsheba's pregnancy -2Sa 11:5, 12:14, 15) when he tried to keep his sins (adultery, murder, lying) secret! No wonder his body wasted away from the overwhelming sense of guilt (Ps 32:3, 4, Pr 28:13). I pray we who are under the New Covenant of grace will learn from David's sad example (1Co 10:6, 11, 12) and when we experience the heaviness of unconfessed sin against a righteous God Who is rightly angered at our sin, we will quickly bow low, humbling ourselves, rending our hearts not our garments, agreeing with God that our rebellion was against His perfect, priceless love, and radically turning from (repenting) the darkness of that sin and unto the light of His presence (communion and intimacy with the Almighty restored), all made possible by the mercy and grace won for us (and David) at Calvary (David looked forward toward the Cross).

[Roe](#) - David wants them blotted out. He can't handle his guilt. It is squeezing him dry, and it is doing it night and day. What is one of the basic problems of sin? I can't forget it. I can have remorse and shame and even repentance, but I can't forget the sin. Now God will forget it [speaking anthropomorphically, in human terms] but I don't forget it. So the next time I look God in the face, there is a barrier of my shame and humiliation. My ego has been crushed. I have done something you wouldn't believe, and I can't believe that God has forgotten and blotted it out, even though he says so. So there comes an alienation from God that is not from God. It is from me. I have been forgiven. I have been cleansed but I still have a sense of shame and humiliation. I don't really feel clean. I John 1:9 says, "If you confess your sin, [If you agree with God about your sin] he is faithful and righteous to forgive your sin and to cleanse you from ALL unrighteousness." Why do you feel dirty five minutes later? Because of shame. Secondly, sin also produces a new chink in your armor. That snowball as it gains mass also gains inertia, resistance to change. The more I say "yes" to sin, the easier it becomes to say "yes" to sin and the more difficult it becomes to say "no." So David knows he has to have this thing dealt with. He does it by facing up to his responsibility.

**Martin Luther** has a pithy comment on this passage writing that...The difference between the true saints and the sham saints is this: the former see their transgressions and realize that they are not what they should be and want to be. Therefore they judge themselves and are not concerned about others. The others, however, do not perceive their own wickedness; they imagine they are as they should be. They always forget about themselves and sit in judgment on the wickedness of others. They pervert this psalm and say: "I perceive the sins of others, and the sins of others are always before me." This is because they have their own sins on their back and a log in their eyes (Mt 7:3, 4, 5). (**Luther's works, vol. 14 : Selected Psalms III**)

**Martin Luther** in another note writes...No one is able to desire forgiveness of sins unless he first acknowledges his sins. Man daily confesses his sins and longs for the remission of sins. Therefore, man acknowledges his sins. The minor premise is proved from the Psalm [51:8], "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Explanation: I reply that this is revealed through the Word. The whole world is ignorant of the magnitude of its sin and does not want to hear about it, and yes, yes it rather punishes those who expose sins. Even if it recognizes, it still does not wish to acknowledge it. But he who confesses and believes is already justified. Men see sin, to be sure, but they do not want this to be sin. They do not want to believe that we still have sins. (**Luther's works, vol. 34 : Career of the Reformer IV**)

**Adam Clarke** A true, deep, and unsophisticated mark of a genuine penitent. Wherever he turns his face, he sees his sin, and through it the eye of an angry God.

**And my sin is ever before me.** Sin, by definition and nature, is anti-God. **Before** (**neged** from **nagad** = to place a matter high and conspicuous before a person) means prominently before so that it is conspicuous. God (through His prophet Nathan) used this same word **neged** to explain how conspicuous David's little secret would become "Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing **before** (**neged**) all Israel, and under the sun." (2Sa 12:12) Imagine every time David looked at his new wife Bathsheba, it must have been a painful reminder of his sin of adultery, but on the other hand a reminder of the greatness of God's forgiveness!

**Adrian Rogers** said "Now if you can sin and easily forget that sin, I doubt that you've been saved—because the Holy Spirit of God is there to remind you of that sin. David said, "**My sin is ever before me.**" "Does that mean, Pastor Rogers, that if I sin, I'll be thinking about it twenty-four hours a day?" Maybe not in your conscious mind, but it will be there in your subconscious. You may kick it out the front door. It will run around the house and come in the basement window. And it will show up as a migraine headache. It will show up as the inability to concentrate. It will show up as an irritable temper. It will show up as the inability to pray. It will show up in other ways. I'm not saying that if you have a migraine, it's because you're a backslider. But I'm saying that some people have one because they are. Their sin is ever before them. It saturates the mind. ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**THOUGHT** - When you sin (and you know you have truly sinned), does it bother you? Or is it like water on a duck's back that the minute you move on to something else, you have already lost all consciousness of that sin? If that is the case then read 2Cor 13:5+ "**Test** ([aorist imperative](#)) yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** ([present imperative](#)) yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"

**Spurgeon** on **ever before me** - My sin as a whole is never out of my mind; it continually oppresses my spirit. I lay it before thee because it is ever before me: Lord, put it away both from thee and me. To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath, but rather a sure preface of abounding favor.

**Guzik** - David didn't say, "My punishment is ever before me," or "My consequences are ever before me." What bothered him was his **sin**. Many grieve over the consequences of sin, but few over sin itself.

**Trapp** - "To my great grief and regret, my conscience twitteth me with it, and the devil layeth it in my dish."

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**Sin** [02403] ([Chattat/chattath](#)) means miss the mark or to fall short of the divine standard; to err and wander. It means wrong, iniquity, sin. **Chattat**, like it's NT counterpart ([hamartia](#)), means to miss or fall short of the mark, which ultimately is the will and plan of God as revealed in Scripture. Sin is whatever misses the will of God for man doctrinally or morally. The result of [chattat/chattah](#) is that man misses the goal God has for him by failing to observe the requirements of holy living and thus falls short of spiritual wholeness. We are all sinners. We all miss the mark, and none of us are perfect nor will we ever be perfect in this life. This is why Christ had to die for our sin so we might have His righteousness (see [2Cor 5:21](#)). [Chattat](#) can be an offense against man (1Sa 20:1 Ps 59:3, Ge 31:36 which also has word *pesha'*) but more often represents an offense against God, and is found mainly in the historical and prophetic literature. It is interesting that even pagan Pharaoh recognized his sin against Jehovah and against Moses (Ex 10:16 where sinned = verb *chata*, 02398), and ask Moses to intercede with God to "remove this death from me." (Ex 10:17) We get a word picture of the meaning of **miss the mark** by the use of the related verb *chata'* (02398) in [Judges 20:16](#) where we read that "Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not **miss** ([Lxx](#) = [examartano](#) [[ex](#) + [hamartano](#)] means to miss one's aim, to err, to sin.)" The Hebrew verb *chata* is used 221v in in OT and is translated "sin" 55x and "sinned" 87x (First use = Ge 20:6, 9). In a different context, *chata* is used in Pr 19:2 to describe a man in a hurry who "misses his way" (Pr 19:2ESV)

**Chattat** is translated by the Lxx here with the noun [hamartia](#) which describes a departure from doing what is right, especially as it relates to God's standard of righteousness.

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**Just Like David** - The elderly woman didn't like the way her pastor prayed each Sunday morning, so she told him. It bothered her

that before he preached he would confess to God that he had sinned the week before. “Pastor,” she said, “I don’t like to think my pastor sins.”

We’d like to believe that our spiritual leaders don’t sin, but reality tells us that no Christian is exempt from the burdens of the sinful nature. Paul told the believers at Colosse to “put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature” (Col 3:5NIV). The problem is that sometimes we don’t do that. We yield to temptation, and we’re left with a mess. But we are not left helpless. We have a pattern to follow for restoration.

That pattern comes from the heart and pen of King David, whose sin demonstrated the sad consequences of succumbing to temptation. Look closely at Psalm 51 as David owned up to his sin. First, he flung himself at God’s feet, pleading for mercy, acknowledging his sin, and trusting in God’s judgment (Ps 51:1-6). Next, he sought cleansing from the One who forgives and wipes the slate clean (Ps 51:7-9). Finally, David asked for restoration with the Holy Spirit’s help (Ps 51:10-12).

Is sin stealing your joy and blocking your fellowship with the Lord? Like David, turn it over to Him. — by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our sinful ways can sap our joy  
And isolate us from the Lord;  
Confession and repentance, though,  
Provide the way to be restored.  
—Sper

**Repentance clears the way  
for us to walk with God.**

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**Call it Sin** - A professional baseball player was suspended from the team when the coach learned that he was addicted to cocaine. He told reporters that his drug abuse wasn’t his fault; he had the disease of chemical dependency.

This approach is understandable— even if it is inaccurate. Some people may indeed have a genetic predisposition to addiction, but we aren’t facing our problem if we won’t accept responsibility for the choices we’ve made. It’s easier to say, “I’m sick,” than it is to say, “I’m wrong.”

That’s the trouble. What may appear at first to be the easiest way out may eventually leave us in a worse condition. Unless we acknowledge that a problem may also be rooted in a sinful choice we’ve made, we will never enjoy the healing we can receive by being forgiven. On the other hand, if we are willing to admit that we did wrong—that we sinned—we can be forgiven by God and by others. By admitting that we have failed, we qualify for the spiritual deliverance that only God can give, and this is a vital part of our healing.

Let’s not hinder the healing process by seeing only the physical side of sin. We must also see the spiritual side. We shouldn’t be too easy on ourselves. If we don’t call sin “sin,” we’ll never experience God’s healing touch. — by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus died to pay sin’s debt,  
Forgiveness to bestow;  
But if we try to make excuse,  
His grace we’ll never know.  
—DJD

**If you make an excuse for sin,  
your sin won’t be excused.**

**Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.**

BGT Psalm 50:6 σο μ ν μαρτον κα τ πονηρ ν ν πι ν σου πο ησα πως ν δικαιωθ ς ν το ς λ γοις σου κα νικ σ ς ν τ κρ νεσθα σε

LXE Psalm 51:4 Against thee only have I sinned, and done evil before thee: that thou mightest be justified in



thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

KJV Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

NET Psalm 51:4 Against you— you above all— I have sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. So you are just when you confront me; you are right when you condemn me.

CSB Psalm 51:4 Against You-- You alone-- I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight. So You are right when You pass sentence; You are blameless when You judge.

ESV Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

NIV Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

NLT Psalm 51:4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

NRS Psalm 51:4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

NJB Psalm 51:4 Against you, you alone, I have sinned, I have done what you see to be wrong, that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence, and your victory may appear when you give judgement,

NAB Psalm 51:6 Against you alone have I sinned; I have done such evil in your sight That you are just in your sentence, blameless when you condemn.

YLT Psalm 51:4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done the evil thing in Thine eyes, So that Thou art righteous in Thy words, Thou art pure in Thy judging.

GWN Psalm 51:4 I have sinned against you, especially you. I have done what you consider evil. So you hand down justice when you speak, and you are blameless when you judge.

BBE Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I done wrong, working that which is evil in your eyes; so that your words may be seen to be right, and you may be clear when you are judging.

RSV Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment.

NKJ Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

ASV Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done that which is evil in thy sight; That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, And be clear when thou judgest.

DBY Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, be clear when thou judgest.

BHT Psalm 51:6 lükä lübaDDükä Häṭä`tí wühära` Bū`ênÊ<sup>°</sup>kä `äSî<sup>°</sup>tí lüma`an TicDaq Būdobre<sup>°</sup>kä TizKè büšopṭe<sup>°</sup>kä

NIRV Psalm 51:4 You are the one I've really sinned against. I've done what is evil in your sight. So you are right when you sentence me. You are fair when you judge me.

RWB Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

WEB Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done {this} evil in thy sight: that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, {and} be clear when thou judgest.

- **Against:** Ge 9:6 Ge 20:6 Ge 39:9 Lev 5:19 Lev 6:2-7 2Sa 12:9,10,13,14 Jas 2:9,11
- **evil:** Ge 38:7 2Ki 17:17 21:6 Lu 15:21
- **thou:** Ps 50:4,6 Lu 7:29 Ro 3:4
- **when:** Ac 17:31 Ro 2:5 Rev 15:3,4 16:5 Rev 19:11 Ps 19

**Related Passage:**

2 Samuel 11:27 When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. **But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.**

## **EVERY SIN IS AGAINST GOD'S HOLINESS!**

**Against You, You only, I have sinned** Yes he had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, their families, his family, his kingdom, and in a sense even against his own body (1Co 6:18+), but even when the wickedness is perpetrated against someone else, the act is ultimately rebellion against God's commands. In 2 Samuel 12:13a+ " David said to Nathan, "I have sinned **against the LORD.**"

When David says "**you only**", which sounds somewhat exclusive, what is the idea he is conveying, because David clearly sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah? Even when a sin is perpetrated against someone else, the act is in the final analysis rebellion against God's laws and instructions. (Leviticus 5:21).

A son...is brokenhearted in that he has broken the heart of God.

-- Adrian Rogers

**Adrian Rogers** says SIN "soils the souls. It saturates the mind. And here is the third thing it does: It stings the conscience. Look in Ps 51:4: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." (Psalm 51:4) Now here David is **conscience-stricken**. Here David is not crying out against the punisher. He's crying out against the sin....**If all you're afraid of is the punishment for your sin, I doubt that you've been saved.** If you're a child of God, when you sin, you don't weep primarily because you're going to get punished. **You weep primarily because you have disgraced your God.** "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." "O God, I'm so ashamed. I sinned against you. Not only, God, did I break your law; I broke your heart." (**ED:** SEE [DEVOTIONAL BELOW](#)) You see, that's the difference between a **slave** and a **son**. A **slave**, when he disobeys, fears the whip, his master's lash. But a **son**, when he disobeys, if he's a loving son, fears his father's displeasure. And he is brokenhearted that he has broken the heart of God. Does your sin bother you that way? When you sin, do you say, "O my God, my God, I sinned against you"? It stings the conscience. ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**THOUGHT** - Does sin break your heart, after the passing pleasures have passed (Heb 11:25+)? Beloved, when what breaks God's heart, breaks your heart than you are well on your way to becoming a man or woman after God's own heart!

Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign,  
Can match the fierce, the unutterable pain  
He feels, who night and day, devoid of rest,  
Carries his own accuser in his breast.

JUVENAL

Here David gives us a "working definition" of the heinousness of sin as that which is "anti-God"! Although it may seem basic, this truth is one which seems to have escaped so many of God's saints. We seem to forget He is holy so that even our "little" willful sins are big in light of His perfect holiness and hatred of sin. Although it is not popular to study the doctrine of sin, I would submit that there are few doctrines more needed by the modern evangelical church. As I have been discipling men using the sins in David's life (2Sa 11, 12), I have been amazed at their surprised reactions to the power of sin and the divine affront of their sin -- against a holy God Who sees every transgression, iniquity and sin. Nathan confronted David with the heart piercing rebuke that "You are the man!" and went on to rehearse the favor from God which David had come to take for granted and the punishment that God would allow because of His sin. As a result of this reproof, David's sense of guilt and conviction overwhelmed him and gave birth to his short but powerful and sincere confession...

**"I have sinned against the LORD."** And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. (2Sa 12:13)

**Kent Hughes Comments:** The grand deterrent to Joseph's sinning (Ge 39:9) was the awareness that God sees all and that a sin that no one knows about, committed behind locked doors in a dark room, is actually done in the presence of a holy God. Joseph believed this. And I am convinced that the personal realization and conviction of this truth is the strongest deterrent to sin that there is. King David invoked it after the horror of his own sin ravaged his soul: "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Psalm 51:3, 4a). ([Beginning and Blessing Preaching the Word](#))

**Derek Kidner** comments on David's self-abased outlook "Notice the immense contrast here to the self-absorbed outlook of 2 Samuel, where David's only question was, in effect, 'How do I cover my tracks?' Now it is, 'How could I treat God so?' His complete acceptance of God's verdict (Ps 51:4b) is matched in the New Testament by the penitent thief (Luke 23:41) (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Roe** - David goes right back and points out that his basic sin was against God. Why would that be true? Why is it that any sin, no matter what, is essentially against God? That is true for Christians. But even for non-Christians sin is still against God. What determines if something is sin? Who is the standard of sin? God. Anything that is less than God's character or violates God's will or in any way his creative order is sinful, whether society recognizes it or not. God did not design a sinful world, "...As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.." [Rom 5:12] is the Scripture. God designed a world that was perfect [at least in the endemic area] and was to be perfect through the creative and responsible ruling of man as he went out in God's power to carry out God's assignment. So when we sin we violate God's moral order. When we sin, we deliberately tell God, "Stick it in your ear." So true confession does what? What did it do here? David confessed for the purpose that God might be what, "...justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge." True repentance says, "You are right and I am wrong. Whatever you choose to do, you are right. You are just." False repentance justifies me. We rationalize, "You really shouldn't punish me totally, God. I am an Irishman. A violent temper goes with my race. We are known for tempers, for getting in fights. That is just part of me." or "I have a strong sensual nature, God, and you shouldn't blame me for Bathsheba. I am a Latin Jew." Rationalization does not justify God, it justifies me, "You don't have the right to punish me all the way, God. It wasn't really all my fault." On the other hand, true repentance says, "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned...and done what is evil in Thy sight." In that way I am choosing to justify God instead of myself. **When I justify myself, I am not asking God to forgive my sin, I am asking him to excuse it. I can find no place in all of Scripture where God has made provision for excusing sin.** However, there is total provision for forgiveness of sin. So God is not being mean and trying to win the argument when he demands that you justify him. That is the only way to forgiveness.

**Spurgeon...Against thee, thee only have I sinned.** The virus of sin lies in its opposition to God: the psalmist's sense of sin towards others rather tended to increase the force of this feeling of sin against God. All his wrong doing centered, culminated, and came to a climax, at the foot of the divine throne. To injure our fellow men is sin, mainly because in so doing we violate the law of God. The penitent's heart was so filled with a sense of the wrong done to the Lord himself, that all other confession was swallowed up in a broken hearted acknowledgment of offence against him. ([Psalm 51](#))

**And done what is evil in Your sight** - This must have been a painful declaration to make, recounting that the all-seeing God had watched his evil deed with Bathsheba and against Uriah! Proverbs 15:3 says "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." Hebrews 4:13 says "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to (give an account)."

**THOUGHT**- Oh, to be able to keep the truth of this passage at the forefront of our mind the next time we are sorely tempted to sin against our loving Father! Amen.

**Spurgeon - And done this evil in thy sight.** To commit treason in the very court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed: David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God, but where there is grace in the soul it reflects a fearful guilt upon every evil act, when we remember that the God whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed.

Wounds cannot be healed until they are revealed and  
sins cannot be forgiven until they are confessed.  
-- Martin Luther

**Barnes** - God saw what he had done; and David knew, or might have known, that the eye of God was upon him in his wickedness. It was to him then a great aggravation of his sin that he had dared to commit it when he knew that God saw everything. The presence of a child—or even of an idiot—would restrain men from many acts of sin which they would venture to commit if alone; how much more should the fact that God is always present, and always sees all that is done, restrain us from open and from secret transgression.

In **Isaiah** God speaking to His chosen people refers to them as "A people who continually provoke **Me to My face**, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks" (Is 65:3)

**So that** (term of purpose or result) **You are justified when You speak** - So that means for the purpose; this confession is for the purpose that as NLT paraphrases it "You will be proved right in what you say, and Your judgment against me is just." **When you speak** refers to God's word of condemnation against his sin delivered through Nathan (cf. 2Sa 12:7-12).

**Barnes on You are justified when You speak** - NLT = "You will be proved right in what you say" That thy character might be

vindicated in all that thou hast said;—in the law which thou hast revealed; in the condemnation of the sin in that law; and in the punishment which thou mayest appoint. That is, he acknowledged his guilt. He did not seek to apologize for it, or to vindicate it. God was right, and he was wrong. The sin deserved all that God in his law had declared it to deserve; it deserved all that God by any sentence which he might pass upon him would declare it to deserve. The sin was so aggravated that any sentence which God might pronounce would not be beyond the measure of its ill-desert. (This verse is quoted in Romans 3:4, upon which Barnes comments) That thou might be regarded as just or right, or, that it may appear that God is not unjust. This does not mean that David had sinned against God for the purpose of justifying him, but that he now clearly saw that his sin had been so directly against him, and so aggravated, that God was right in his sentence of condemnation. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**And blameless ([zakah](#)) when You judge ([shaphat](#))** - NET - "you are right when you condemn me." NLT - "your judgment against me is just." David in a sense "[exonerates](#)" God (as if he needed to be exonerated!) In Psalm 19:9 David says "The judgments ([mishpat/mispat](#) from [shaphat](#)) of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether."

**Guzik** - David's confession of sin was not only to relieve himself of the great burden of his sin and guilt. More so, it was to bring glory to God. In confessing his sin, David hoped to confirm God's justice and holy character, proving that His commands were good and just even when David broke those commands.

**Barnes on blameless when You judge**, noting that it refers to God's "words in relation to this offence... Remember that the psalm was written immediately after Nathan, at the command of God, had gone to reprove David for his crime. God, by the mouth of Nathan, had expressly condemned David for his crime. To this expression of condemnation David doubtless refers by the expression "in thy sayings;" see 2Sa 12:7-13.

**Utley** - The TEV catches the meaning of these two lines of poetry. "So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me." This is quoted by Paul from the LXX in Rom. 3:4. It is introduced by "let God be found true, though every man be found a liar."

**Spurgeon** - *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest* He could not present any argument against divine justice, if it proceeded at once to condemn him and punish him for his crime. His own confession, and the judge's own witness of the whole transaction, places the transgression beyond all question or debate; the iniquity was indisputably committed, and was unquestionably a foul wrong, and therefore the course of justice was clear and beyond all controversy.

**Albert Barnes** comments that...The state of mind here illustrated is that which occurs in every case of true penitence. It is not merely because that which has been done is a violation of human law; it is not that it brings us to poverty or disgrace; it is not that it exposes us to punishment on earth from a parent, a teacher, or civil ruler; it is not that it exposes us to punishment in the world to come:—it is that it is of itself, and apart from all other relations and consequences, an offence against God; a violation of his pure and holy law; a wrong done against him, and in his sight. Unless there is this feeling there can be no true penitence; and unless there is this feeling there can be no hope of pardon, for God forgives offences only as committed against himself; not as involving us in dangerous consequences, or as committed against our fellow-men. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**J R Miller**...Another of David's thoughts about his sin, was that it was against God alone. "Against you, you only, have I sinned." The smallest wrong thing we do—is done primarily against God. If we speak a rude or impatient word to a beggar—it strikes God's heart, and the sin is against Him. If we are unkind to a dumb beast—we sin against God. Our unholy thoughts, which we think harm no one—grieve God. Every sin is a personal offence to Him. We may injure others and do wrong and injustice to them—but the sin is really and always against God. It is the law of God that we break, no matter what evil thing we do; and in breaking His law—we have struck God in the face. We stand in such relations to God all the while—that every act, word, or thought of ours affects Him personally: either pleasing Him and meeting His approval or grieving Him and receiving His condemnation. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

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**Blameless (kept pure)**([02135](#)) [zakah](#) means meaning to clean, to be clean, to cleanse. It is found only 8x in the OT - Job 15:14 = "What is man, that he should be pure"; Job 25:4 = "how can he be clean who is born of woman?"; Ps. 51:4 = "blameless when You judge"; Ps. 73:13 = "Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure"; Ps. 119:9; Pr 20:9 = "who can say I have cleansed my heart"; Isa. 1:16 = "make yourselves clean"; Mic. 6:11 = "Can I justify wicked scales"

**TWOT** -The term appears twice in Job (Job 15:14; Job 25:4), and both times Job's comforters are asking how a man can be pure in the sight of God. In each verse zākâ is parallel to šādaq "be righteous." A similar question appears in Proverbs 20:9 where the admission is made that no one has kept his heart pure and sinless. Those who walk in accord with God's word can live pure lives, however (Psalm 119:9). The psalmist also notes that at times the wicked appear to be happier and more prosperous than the one who keeps his heart pure (Psalm 73:13), but in the end the wicked are ruined. In Isaiah 1:16 God warns the people of Judah that they must wash and make themselves clean or face severe judgment. Twice the verb is used of God. In Psalm 51:4 David admits that God was "justified" when he judged David for his sin with Bathsheba. The interpretation of Micah 6:11 is difficult. Is God asking

if he should "justify wicked scales" (NASB) or "acquit a man" (RSV, NIV) who uses dishonest scales? The thought seems to be that God will not "declare pure" such a sinner.

**Zakah** - 8v - blameless(1), clean(1), cleansed(1), justify(1), keep his pure(1), kept my pure(1), make yourselves clean(1), pure(1). Job 15:14; Job 25:4; Ps. 51:4; Ps. 73:13; Ps. 119:9; Prov. 20:9; Isa. 1:16; Mic. 6:11

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**Hurting God** - When we hurt another person, we hurt God. If I wrong you, I am also offending Him. If I steal from you, I am robbing Him. If I lie to you, I am lying to the One who is truth. If I take your life, I destroy what is precious to God. This truth is often forgotten in the lax moral environment of our culture.

A top officer of a Japanese financial institution was in tears as he heaped blame on himself for his corporation's collapse. We too may feel sorry when our actions inflict undeserved suffering on others. This is commendable. But when there is deliberate wrongdoing, a tearful apology is incomplete if God is left out of the confession. Until we see sin for what it is—rebellion against God—we have not come to grips with it.

When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). And in Psalm 51 David confessed, "Against You, You only, have I sinned" (Ps 51:4). Surely David knew he had stolen another man's wife and murdered a loyal soldier. Yet he went to the heart of the matter—no excuses, no rationalization. He had sinned against God! That's the admission God is looking for, because He longs to give us His mercy and forgiveness. --Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

O Lord, return to me Your power  
That once by grace I knew;  
Forgive the sin that grieves Your heart,  
And help me to be true.  
—Anon.

**No sin is little,  
for it is against an infinitely holy God.**

**Ezekiel** speaks of the hurtful effect of sin on God writing "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how **I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me**, and by their eyes, which played the harlot after their idols; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations. (Ezekiel 6:9+)

**THOUGHT** - Dear Father, help us by Thy Spirit to loathe our sin and to grasp the eternal truth that our sin hurts You, so that we might allow this truth to serve as a preventative of willful transgressions against You. Amen.

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**James Butler - CONFESSION Psalm 51:4**

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (Psalm 51:4).

This great confession of the sin of adultery and murder by David instructs us in some important truths spiritually that we need to know. David confessed four truths about his sin.

**FIRST—THE CHARACTER OF SIN**

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." The worst thing about sin is that it is against God. Yes it is also against man. But our text means that the sin was chiefly against God not "only" against God. David like others (cp Joseph in Genesis 39:9) realized he had greatly dishonored God by his sin. In fact, the prophet Nathan told David. "by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Samuel 12:13). David's sin has forever stained Bathsheba and it ended the life of Uriah. David was a great sinner but the great curse of his sin was that it was against God.

**SECOND—THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN**

"I sinned." Adultery and murder are sin. Our society is not so sure. Immorality is common in our society, and few condemn it. And abortion, which is nothing but murder, is accepted by most people. But the Bible

condemns adultery and murder and puts them in the category of sin. Many things our society practices are wicked and sinful according to the Bible but not according to our society.

### THIRD—THE CONFESSION OF SIN

"I sinned." David did not try to excuse his sin or call it another name other than sin, he simply confessed he had sinned. Confession is what God tells us to do if we want pardon. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). We try everything but confession of sin and then wonder why God does not respond charitably. You get saved when you confess you are a sinner. No one gets saved by excuses or calling sin by another name. If you want God's pardon confess your sin.

### FOURTH—THE COGNIZANCE OF SIN

"In thy sight." No one can hid their sin from God. He sees all. We may think that if we turn the lights out that God will not see, but he does. He sees out hearts and our minds and knows all about us (Psalm 139). David tried to conceal his sin and he may have concealed it from some men, but he did not hid it from God and God can make it public.

### FIFTH—THE CLEARING OF SIN

"That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and clear when thou judgest." When God condemns sinful conduct and condemns the sinner, He is justified. Men would charge Him with guilt, but they are wrong. God is never to be condemned when he denounces sin or brings judgment for it. It is not a crime to punish crime. God is cleared of sin when He brings judgment on sin because sin is so evil.

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### QUESTION - [Why is every sin ultimately a sin against God?](#)

**ANSWER** - Sin often harms another person, but, ultimately, all sin is against God. The Bible contains many references to people admitting, "I have sinned against God" (Exodus 10:16; Joshua 7:20; Judges 10:10). Genesis 39:9 gives us a closer look at this. [Joseph](#) was being tempted to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife. In resisting her, he said, "My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" It is interesting that Joseph did not say that his sin would be against Potiphar. This isn't to say that Potiphar would be unaffected. But Joseph's greater loyalty was to God and His laws. It was God he did not want to offend.

David said something similar after he had sinned with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). When confronted with his sin, David repented in great sorrow, saying to God, "Against You and You only have I sinned" (Psalm 51:4). He had clearly sinned against Bathsheba and her husband, too, but it was the violation of God's law that grieved David the most. God hates sin because it is the antithesis of His nature and because it harms us or someone else. By sinning against God, David had also hurt other people.

When someone commits a crime, the person who was harmed by the crime is *not* the one who punishes the criminal. Only the state can legally mete out punishment. It is the law that judges a person guilty or innocent, not the victim. It is the law that was violated. Regardless of the worthiness or innocence of the victim, all crimes are ultimately committed against the established law. If you rob your neighbor's house, you have obviously wronged your neighbor, but it is not he who holds you accountable. It is the higher law you have violated. The state bears the responsibility to convict and punish you; your neighbor, although affected by your crime, defers to the state.

In the same way, all moral law begins with God. Because we were created in the image of God, we have His moral law written within our hearts (Genesis 1:27). When Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:22). At that time, no written law had been given, as far as we know. Yet God had clearly communicated His will to Adam and Eve, and they knew that they had sinned and ran to hide from God (Genesis 3:10). Their shame after sinning was intuitive.

We also know intuitively when we have sinned. Sin is a perversion of God's perfect design. We all bear the very image of God Himself, and when we sin, we mar that likeness. We were created to be mirrors of the glory of God (Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Hebrews 2:7). Sin is a big smudge on the mirror, and it diminishes the beauty and holiness we were designed to reflect. When we sin, we step outside the purpose for which we were created, thus violating God's moral law, and we are accountable to Him for the trespass. Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin is anything that falls short of God's plan. So, whether it harms us or someone else, every sin is ultimately against a holy God. [GotQuestions.org](#)

### Related Resource:

- [How does sin separate us from God? | GotQuestions.org](#)

BGT Psalm 50:7 δο γ ρ ν νομ αις συνελ μφθην κα ν μαρτ αις κ σσησ ν με μ τηρ μου

LXE Psalm 51:5 For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me.

KJV Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

NET Psalm 51:5 Look, I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me.

CSB Psalm 51:5 Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

ESV Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

NIV Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

NLT Psalm 51:5 For I was born a sinner-- yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

NRS Psalm 51:5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

NJB Psalm 51:5 remember, I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception.

NAB Psalm 51:7 True, I was born guilty, a sinner, even as my mother conceived me.

YLT Psalm 51:5 Lo, in iniquity I have been brought forth, And in sin doth my mother conceive me.

GWN Psalm 51:5 Indeed, I was born guilty. I was a sinner when my mother conceived me.

BBE Psalms 51:5 Truly, I was formed in evil, and in sin did my mother give me birth.

RSV Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

NKJ Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

ASV Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me.

DBY Psalm 51:5 Behold, in iniquity was I brought forth, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

BHT Psalm 51:7 hēn-Bū`āwōn Hōlā<sup>q</sup>ITî ūbūHē<sup>q</sup>†' ye|Héma<sup>q</sup>tnî 'immî

NIRV Psalm 51:5 I know I've been a sinner ever since I was born. I've been a sinner ever since my mother became pregnant with me.

RWB Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

WEB Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

- **shapen:** Ps 58:3 Ge 5:3 8:21 Job 14:4 15:14-16 Joh 3:6 Ro 5:12 Eph 2:3
- [The Guilt and the Cleansing - Spurgeon](#)
- [A Mingled Strain - Spurgeon](#)
- [The Wordless Book - Spurgeon](#)

## ORIGINAL SIN SINNERS FROM CONCEPTION

In verses 5 through 9 David makes a plea for spiritual healing. First he sought forgiveness in Ps 51:1-4, and now in Ps 51:5-9 he wants to be made whole again. Let it be so in the innermost being in every soul who prays this psalm Lord God. Amen

**Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) - This interjection always calls one to pay special attention to what follows. It is as if David now sees sin as he has never seen sin before.

**I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me** - Note that this is no diatribe against conception. Neither is David seeking to use this as an excuse. David's point is that from birth every human being has the innate propensity to commit sins. His crime was not some accidental misstep but was an outworking of his inherently warped heart, a heart that sprang forth from faulty stock that could ultimately be traced back to Adam. Paul explains how every person ever born obtained the "sin virus" writing "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Ro 5:12+) We see a similar statement in Psalm 58 "The wicked are **estranged from the womb**. These who speak lies **go astray from birth**." (Ps 58:3+).

[Bob Roe](#) - David sinned because he was a sinner. Adam sinned to become a sinner, but everyone else sins because they are sinners. That is the natural fruit. That little "blossom" that you are just letting grow into a beautiful flower ends up a stinkweed before you know it because we are all born flawed. "And in sin my mother conceived me." That doesn't necessarily mean he was conceived out of wedlock, but in sin his mother brought him forth because she was a sinner. Like produces like. So babies have three strikes on them when they are born. They are born sinners. Doubt me? Who taught your child to bellow his lungs out in the middle of the night for "chow now?" You have had a horrible day with this little savage and daddy has had a rotten day at the office, but junior runs the house, all 18" of him. Now who taught him to be totally self-centered? When he gets to the point where he has a rational mind and can choose, what piece of cake does he choose; the small one, the lowest place? Hardly, he belts little sister in the face and grabs the biggest piece. You trained him to do that did you? No, that is his natural little self. There is another side to the coin though. Yes, I was born in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me. I was born with a twisted, flawed and fallen nature, but there is an opposite, Jesus Christ. In exchange for my twisted nature I can have the nature of God. So the first thing David does is acknowledge he is lost. He could promise God all he wanted that he would never do it again, but he knows he can't. The next time temptation comes along, he may fall. So he tells God, "I can't solve my own problem." He can't move. He can't change jobs. He can't change wives. He can't change anything. Besides what is the problem with trying any of these things? The problem is that I go with them, and I am the problem. Remember the famous theologian Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." If I try to kid myself that I am not the problem, I can spend my whole life running around to different jobs, different locations, different environments, different wives, different husbands, whatever, but unfortunately the problem goes right with me. The day I face up to the fact that I am a twisted, flawed and fallen creature and that I am the problem, healing begins.

**John Brug** comments that In this confession David also acknowledges original sin. CORRUPT ACTIONS FLOW FROM A CORRUPT NATURE. Like all of us, David had been conceived and born with a corrupt nature inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12). He had been born as an enemy of God, whose will was opposed to God. He had been born as a condemned sinner, worthy of damnation. Although David had been freed from the rule of his sinful nature, he had allowed it to regain control over him, and he had fallen into terrible sin. Though it was an extreme example, David's sin was no fluke, no accident, no surprise. It was an expression of the corrupt nature that lurks within, even when it is covered with a veneer of decency. David realized that his need for forgiveness extended beyond forgiveness for a few gross sins, horrible as those may have been. He recognized a need for complete renewal. (The People's Bible)

**J R Miller**...Another thought of his sin which David had, was that it was inborn. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." He was not born holy. Sin is not altogether a habit which one acquires through years of living. It is not a result of bad education. It is not a little soiling of one's nature from the outside, by contact with an evil world. Sin is in the heart—and was born with us ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**Spurgeon**...

**Behold, I was shapen in iniquity.** He is thunderstruck at the discovery of his inbred sin, and proceeds to set it forth. This was not intended to justify himself, but it rather meant to complete the confession. It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams. My birth tendencies are out of the square of equity; I naturally lean to forbidden things. Mine is a constitutional disease, rendering my very person obnoxious to thy wrath.

**And in sin did my mother conceive me.** He goes back to the earliest moment of his being, not to traduce his mother, but to acknowledge the deep tap roots of his sin. It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith. David's mother was the Lord's handmaid, he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father, and he was himself, "the man after God's own heart;" and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact. In our shaping we were put out of shape, and when we were conceived our nature conceived sin. Alas, for poor humanity! Those who will may cry it up, but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament his lost estate.

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**Behold** (02009) [hinneh](#) an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) [Hinneh](#) generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so [hinneh](#) is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would



add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Hinneh** is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection **idou** (strictly speaking a command in the second person **aoist imperative, middle voice**) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: **"Behold! See! Lo!"** (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

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**WHITER THAN SNOW James Nicholson, c. 1828–1876 - Borrow [Amazing grace](#) by Kenneth W. Osbeck**

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:7)

God's people have been placed in their particular circle of influence so they can demonstrate purity and a concern for righteousness. If we do not fulfill this role, who will? It is easy, however, to become so accustomed and hardened to the lust and sin all about us that we lose that fine edge of our Christian witness. In fact, without God's daily cleansing and renewal, we are easily infiltrated with and influenced by the very lifestyle that we reject in others.

**Unconfessed sin becomes a destructive poison in our lives, not only spiritually but also emotionally and physically.** Repentance and confession are always the starting points for a restored fellowship with God. Like the psalmist David did in his prayer in Psalm 51, we all need to experience God's cleansing and forgiveness. Only then will we be effective for God in helping others and directing sinners to Him (Psalm 51:13).

This is another fine hymn text written by a Christian layman. James Nicholson spent his entire life as a clerk in the post office in Philadelphia, yet he was always active in the work of the Wharton Street Methodist Episcopal Church. The hymn was first published in a pamphlet titled "Joyful Songs" in 1872. The hymn's popularity greatly increased with its inclusion in the well-known Gospel Hymns series published by Sankey and Bliss. It has since provided a musical prayer that needs to be expressed by every Christian on a daily basis:

**[Play this great hymn and sing it as your prayer to Him..](#)**

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want thee forever to live in my soul,  
break down ev'ry idol, cast out ev'ry foe—  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies  
and help me to make a complete sacrifice.  
I give up myself and whatever I know—  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat;  
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet.  
By faith, for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow—  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait;  
come now and within me a new heart create.  
To those who have sought Thee Thou never saidst "No"—  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain:

Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow—  
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

For Today: Psalm 32:3; Isaiah 1:18; Romans 3:24, 25; 1 Corinthians 6:11

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any area of sin.
- Confess it to God and claim His forgiving grace.
- Pray this prayer with the hymn writer -- **"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole..."**

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**True Confessions** - I love coconut. I always have! So, after an exhausting day in second grade, I found a bag of shredded coconut

in the cupboard and devoured the whole thing. When my mother went into the kitchen later to bake—you guessed it, a coconut cake—I heard, “Who ate the coconut?!”

I knew I was in trouble, but my escape plan was simple—a quick, easy lie: “Not me!”

She continued her inquiry with my sisters, but after they denied it, we all heard the familiar words: “Wait till your Dad comes home!” My cover-up plan was doomed to failure, and later that evening I finally confessed.

No one had to teach me to lie. As the psalmist David admits, “I was brought forth in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5). But in his sin David knew where to go—to the God of abundant mercy who will cleanse us from our sin (Ps. 51:1, 2).

When we recognize the ongoing reality of sin in our lives, we are reminded of our ongoing need for the presence of God and the power of His Word to keep us safe and spiritually sane. He is waiting for us to confess our faults and embrace the forgiveness and cleansing that He readily offers.

Remember, a refreshing plunge into God’s mercy awaits you on the other side of confessed sin! — by Joe Stowell ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Out of my shameful failure and loss,  
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;  
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,  
Jesus, I come to Thee.  
—Sleeper

**Own up to your sin and  
experience the joy of confession**

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#### **QUESTION - [What does it mean that we are conceived in sin?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Second Samuel 11 gives the account of how David committed not only [adultery with Bathsheba](#), but also conspired to have her husband killed. Feeling the weight of his sin, David penned several psalms that speak directly to his regret and his desire for God’s forgiveness. Nathan, a prophet of God and David’s trusted friend, goes to David regarding his sins. It is during this conversation that David is fully convicted of his sin and realizes the depth of his depravity. The result was Psalm 51, where in verse 5 David states the following: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me” (NKJV). Are all people conceived in sin? Or was David a special case?

#### **Original Sin**

Sin is missing the mark that God sets. It is against God’s law: “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). When a person fails to obey God’s commandments, he commits sin. The first instance of human sin in the Bible is the [fall of Adam and Eve](#) in the Garden of Eden. God gave them a clear command: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Genesis 2:16–17). Even though Adam and Eve had free rein to enjoy the vast bounty that God had provided for them, the lure of the forbidden fruit was too much. Genesis 3 gives the account of their sin and God’s righteous punishment. Adam and Eve had a choice to either obey or disobey God’s commandment. They freely chose to sin. After that, Adam “had a son in his own likeness, in his own image” (Genesis 5:3). That likeness included a sinful nature. In that respect, all of Adam’s children were “conceived in sin.”

#### **Sin Nature Passed Down**

Romans 3:23 states, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Why do all sin? Where does the sinful nature come from? Paul gives the answer: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). This passage refers to the original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The sinful nature has been innate in all people since the moment Adam blatantly disobeyed God’s commandment and ate the forbidden fruit. Adam, being the first man and therefore the father of the human race, passed down this [sinful nature](#) to all who came after him. Sin has been our inheritance from Adam ever since.

#### **“Conceived in sin”**

Looking again at Psalm 51:5, David said, “In sin did my mother conceive me” (ESV). This doesn’t mean that he was conceived illegitimately. Instead, this verse speaks to the fact that David’s mother was a sinner. She inherited that sinful nature from her parents, and they from theirs, and so on throughout the genealogical line all the way back to Adam and Eve. Psalm 58:3 states the

same truth: “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies.” The birth of a human being means that one more sinner populates the earth. Everyone is “conceived in sin.”

The only exception to those born with a sin nature is Jesus Christ. Jesus, the [virgin-born](#) Son of God, was sinless from the moment of His conception. 1 Peter 2:22 speaks of Jesus’ sinless nature: “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

### **Conceived in Sin — Conclusion**

Human beings sin, but that’s not the only reason they are sinners. They are born sinners. David realized this fact and expressed it as having been conceived in sin in Psalm 51:5. All humans are similarly conceived in sin; that is, we all have this inbred sin nature. The good news is that there is a solution to this problem. In Adam we die, but in Christ we live. “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!” (Romans 5:17).

Though all are born sinners, deserving of death, all have the opportunity for salvation. God offers us the [gift of eternal life](#) through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:1–18). The curse of sin that all people inherit from the “first man Adam” can be broken by faith in “the last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **QUESTION - [If we are born in sin, how is it fair for God to judge us for our sin?](#)**

**ANSWER** - A common accusation against Christianity is that it unfairly judges people. In particular, some people say that God sets us up for failure and then punishes us for the failure that He caused. If that were true, it would indeed be an unfair situation. Is that the way Christianity works? Does God unfairly judge us for something we have no control over? The answers are found in the Bible.

To begin, we must find out what the Bible says about our being born in sin. David, the man after God’s own heart, wrote in Psalm 51:5, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” The apostle Paul wrote that we all gratify “the cravings of our sinful nature” (Ephesians 2:3). That means there is something naturally inside us that pushes us toward sin.

So, the Bible certainly does teach that we are born in sin. Did God just arbitrarily decide people were going to be born sinful? The answer is found in connection with the first man, Adam. When Adam was created (without sin) by God and placed in the garden of Eden, he was also given a simple law (Genesis 2:16–17). Adam disobeyed God’s law, and God pronounced him guilty and sentenced him to death. It was Adam’s choice to disobey that made him guilty before God. He was the father of the human race, and his traits were passed on to his children. Romans 5:12 says that sin entered the world through Adam, and death came through sin, because all sinned. As descendants of Adam, we received the sin nature [passed down](#) from our fathers. That makes us born in sin, with a natural inclination to do wrong.

Some might argue that we cannot choose our family, so God cannot hold us accountable for the sin nature. While we might not have any choice about how we’re born, the Bible is clear that we do have a choice about our sins. Earlier, we looked at Ephesians 2:3, which says that we gratify the cravings of our sinful nature. That is a choice. Romans 5:12 says that “all sinned.” We are sinners by deed as well as by nature. Our own sin condemns us, not just Adam’s. We are born in sin, but we continue to sin by our own personal choice. When we choose sin, we become guilty before God, and His judgment is fair.

God is not only fair, but merciful. The Bible’s teaching about personal sin doesn’t end with a declaration of man’s guilt. Romans 5, which tells us that sin and death entered the world through one man, also tells us of the greatest blessing, which also came through one man. God’s gift of grace came through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:15) and overflowed to many. Verse 19 says, “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” God is just in applying Adam’s sin to the entire human race, and He is just in applying Jesus Christ’s death to all who will receive Him by faith. Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, so that the world might have life through faith in His sacrifice. That’s not “fair”—that’s [grace!](#) [GotQuestions.org](#)

### **Related Resources from Gotquestions.org:**

- [Are we all born sinners?](#)
- [Did we all inherit sin from Adam and Eve?](#)
- [What is original sin?](#)
- [What does it mean that we are conceived in sin?](#)
- [What is the origin of sin?](#)

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### **QUESTION - [What is original sin?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The term *original sin* refers to Adam's sin of disobedience in eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and its effects upon the rest of the human race. *Original sin* can be defined as "the moral corruption we possess as a consequence of Adam's sin, resulting in a sinful disposition manifesting itself in habitually sinful behavior." The doctrine of original sin focuses particularly on its effect on our internal nature and our standing before God. There are three main views that deal with that effect:

**Pelagianism**: This view says that Adam's sin had no effect upon the souls of his descendants other than that he provided a sinful example. Adam's example has influenced those who followed him to also sin. But, according to this view, man has the ability to stop sinning if he simply chooses to. Pelagianism runs contrary to a number of passages that indicate man is hopelessly enslaved by his sins (apart from God's intervention) and that his good works are "dead" or worthless in meriting God's favor (Ephesians 2:1–2; Matthew 15:18–19; Romans 7:23; Hebrews 6:1; 9:14).

**Arminianism**: Arminians believe Adam's original sin has resulted in the rest of mankind inheriting a corrupt, sinful nature, which causes us to sin in the same way that a cat's nature causes it to meow—it comes naturally. According to this view, man cannot stop sinning on his own; God's supernatural, enabling grace, called [prevenient grace](#), in conjunction with the gospel, allows that person to choose to exercise faith in Christ. The teaching of prevenient grace is not explicitly found in Scripture.

**Calvinism**: The Calvinistic doctrine of original sin states that Adam's sin has resulted not only in our having a sin nature, but also in our incurring guilt before God for which we deserve punishment. Being conceived with original sin upon us (Psalm 51:5) results in our inheriting a sin nature so wicked that Jeremiah 17:9 describes the human heart as "deceitful above all things and beyond cure." Not only was Adam found guilty because he sinned, but his sin was imputed to us, making us guilty and deserving of his punishment (death) as well (Romans 5:12, 19). There are two views as to why Adam's sin should be imputed to us. The first view states that the human race was within Adam in seed form; thus, when Adam sinned, we sinned in him. This is similar to the biblical teaching that Levi (a descendant of Abraham) paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:4–9), even though Levi was not born until hundreds of years later. The other main view is that Adam served as our representative, and so, when he sinned, we were found guilty as well.

Both the Arminian and Calvinistic views teach original sin and see individuals as unable to overcome sin apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Most all Calvinists also teach imputed sin; some Arminians deny imputation of sin, and others believe that Christ's death has negated the effects of imputation.

The fact of original sin means that we cannot please God on our own. No matter how many "good deeds" we do, we still commit sin, and we still have the problem of a corrupt nature within. We must have Christ; we must be born again (John 3:3). God deals with the effects of original sin in our hearts through the process of [sanctification](#). As John Piper puts it, "The problem of our moral defilement and habitual sinning is solved by his purifying us by the work of Spirit" ("[Adam, Christ, and Justification: Part IV](#)," preached 8/20/2000). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Related Resources:

- [What is imputed sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Federalism vs. seminalism—which view is correct? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the origin of sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Psalm 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.**

Amplified - Behold, You desire truth in the inner being; make me therefore to know wisdom in my inmost heart.

BGT Psalm 50:8 δο γ ρ λ θειαν γ πησας τ δηλα κα τ κρ φια τ ς σοφ ας σου δ λωσ ς μοι

LXE Psalm 51:6 For, behold, thou lovest truth: thou hast manifested to me the secret and hidden things of thy wisdom.

KJV Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

NET Psalm 51:6 Look, you desire integrity in the inner man; you want me to possess wisdom.

CSB Psalm 51:6 Surely You desire integrity in the inner self, and You teach me wisdom deep within.

ESV Psalm 51:6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

NIV Psalm 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

NLT Psalm 51:6 But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there.

NRS Psalm 51:6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

NJB Psalm 51:6 But you delight in sincerity of heart, and in secret you teach me wisdom.

NAB Psalm 51:8 Still, you insist on sincerity of heart; in my inmost being teach me wisdom.

YLT Psalm 51:6 Lo, truth Thou hast desired in the inward parts, And in the hidden part Wisdom Thou causest me to know.

GWN Psalm 51:6 Yet, you desire truth and sincerity. Deep down inside me you teach me wisdom.

BBE Psalm 51:6 Your desire is for what is true in the inner parts: in the secrets of my soul you will give me knowledge of wisdom.

RSV Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

NKJ Psalm 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

ASV Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; And in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.

DBY Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.

BHT Psalm 51:8 hën-´émet Häpa<sup>9</sup>cTä baṭṭùHôt ûbüsätùm Hokmâ tôdî`ë<sup>9</sup>nî

NIRV Psalm 51:6 I know that you want truth to be in my heart. You teach me wisdom deep down inside me.

RWB Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

WEB Psalm 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden {part} thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

- Behold: Ps 26:2 125:4 Ge 20:5,6 2Ki 20:3 1Ch 29:17 2Ch 31:20,21 Pr 2:21 Jer 5:3 Joh 4:23,24 2Co 1:12 Jas 4:8
- inward: Ps 5:9 1Sa 16:7 Job 38:36 Lu 11:39 Ro 7:22
- in the hidden: Job 32:8 Jer 31:33 32:40 1Pe 3:4

**Behold**, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) **You desire truth in the innermost being** - David had been living in deceit, deceived by his own sin! (Heb 3:13+) God desires truth on the inside where He alone sees, not just a veneer of "truth" on the outside which men see (that's called hypocrisy!). God knows our **character**. Men know our **reputation**. **Truth on the outside** that corresponds to **truth on the inside** is a description of a character of integrity (the idea of "integer" or oneness - there is a "one to one" correlation between our actions and our heart.) Unconfessed sin prevents that one to one correlation.

**NET note** on **behold** - The juxtaposition of two occurrences of "look" (**Behold**) in vv. 5–6 draws attention to the sharp contrast between the sinful reality of the psalmist's condition and the lofty ideal God has for him.

**Spurgeon...Behold**. Here is the great matter for consideration. God desires not merely outward virtue, but inward purity, and the penitent's sense of sin is greatly deepened as with astonishment he discovers this truth, and how far he is from satisfying the divine demand. The second "Behold" is fitly set over against the first; how great the gulf which yawns between them! Thou desirest truth in the inward parts. Reality, sincerity, true holiness, heart fidelity, these are the demands of God. He cares not for the pretence of purity, he looks to the mind, heart, and soul. Always has the Holy One of Israel estimated men by their inner nature, and not by their outward professions; to him the inward is as visible as the outward, and he rightly judges that the essential character of an action lies in the motive of him who works it. ([Psalm - 51 - Verse 6 - Treasury of David](#))

**Charles Horne** comments that...The force of "**Behold**," is—"It is too plain; I feel it but too sensibly; the punishment I suffer is evidence sufficient, that thou art not contented with a superficial appearance of goodness; You love truth and sincerity in the bottom of the heart." This God was now teaching him, by the correction He made him suffer. The punishment inflicted tended to give him a right understanding of things, and to work it deep into him.—Mudge. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**Kidner** observes that the Hebrew verbs are "A series of futures, not imperatives, begins with 6b (Heb. 8b; lit. 'thou shalt teach me

...'), to the end of 8. Coverdale's version, in the Prayer Book, is almost alone in reproducing them as the affirmations which they are. (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Constable** comments...David also realized God wanted him to be completely honest, not just to offer an offering. He needed to get his heart right with God. His confession had to be genuine rather than the superficial repetition of some words. Wisdom in the Old Testament refers to living life in the light of God's presence and revelation. God wants people to be completely honest with Him and to deal with reality. David acknowledged this. ([Psalms Expository Notes](#))

**Thomas Watson** writes...Sincerity is of universal importance to a Christian. It is the sauce which seasons piety and makes it savory. Sincerity is the jewel which God is most delighted with, Psalm 51:6. "Behold you desire truth in the inward parts." To speak plainly--all our pompous show of holiness, without this soul of sincerity to enliven it—it is but 'pious folly'. It is but going to hell in a more devout manner than others! ([The Upright Mans Character](#))

**J R Miller**...Notice David's thought about the renewal which comes with God's forgiveness. It is inward renewal. When the love of God streamed into his soul—he saw how much he needed to have done in him to make him what God would have him to be. First, he had a new conception of the divine requirement. "**You desire truth in the inward parts.**" Truth is genuineness, sincerity, righteousness. God despises hypocrisy. No mere external reformation will avail—while the heart remains wrong. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom**The word for "wisdom" is [chokmah](#) the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life." **Chokmah** is the knowledge and the ability to make the right choices at the opportune time. The consistency of making the right choice is an indication of one's spiritual maturity. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge: All true spiritual wisdom is found only in Christ.

We can get INFORMATION "on LINE" (from Google)  
but WISDOM is from "on HIGH" (from God)!

**Spurgeon**...And in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. The penitent feels that God is teaching him truth concerning his nature, which he had not before perceived. The love of the heart, the mystery of its fall, and the way of its purification -- this hidden wisdom we must all attain; and it is a great blessing to be able to believe that the Lord will "make us to know it." No one can teach our innermost nature but the Lord, but he can instruct us to profit. The Holy Spirit can write the law on our heart, and that is the sum of practical wisdom. He can put the fear of the Lord within, and that is the beginning of wisdom. He can reveal Christ in us, and he is essential wisdom. Such poor, foolish, disarranged souls as ours, shall yet be ordered aright, and truth and wisdom shall reign within us.

**Barnes** explains this as follows...God only can enable me to understand what is truly wise. This wisdom, this cleansing, this knowledge of the way in which a guilty man can be restored to favor, can be imparted only by God; and "You will do it." There is here, therefore, at the same time a recognition of the truth that this "must" come from God, and an act of faith, or a strong assurance that God "would" impart this.

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**Desire** ([02654](#)) ([chaphets](#)) originally meant "to bend" (cp Job 40:17) and hence "incline to" and then to "take pleasure in." The basic idea is feel great favor towards something. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **chaphets** with the Greek word **agapao** which means to love, expressing the purest, noblest form of love, a love which springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object.

**Truth** ([0571](#)) ('[emeth](#) from [aman](#) = conveys the idea of certainty) means that which is true, certain, sure, which conforms to reality, and is so certain not to be false. It can convey the idea of faithfulness (Neh 7:2). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates 'emeth with the Greek word **aletheia** [**word study**] which describes the quality of being in accord with what is true, truthfulness, dependability, uprightness in thought and deed

**Innermost** ([02910](#)) ([tuchah](#)) describes an object covered over, hidden, or concealed. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **tuchah** with the Greek word **adelos** meaning not manifest, unseen

**Hidden part** ([05640](#)) ([catham](#)) means that which is concealed (cp Da 12:4, Da 12:9), that which is secret (Da 8:26) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **catham** with the Greek word **kruphios** meaning hidden or secret (Mt 6:18).

Tuchôth is a feminine plural noun from tûach (HED #3012), meaning "most inward parts" or "secrecy." The two OT passages in which this word occurs both speak of the inward part of a person as a place or seat of wisdom or truth (Ps. 51:6; Job 38:36). Its occurrence in each passage cannot be understood as a reference to the physical inner organs of a person; rather, this word speaks of the center of a person's life. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Know** (03045)([yada](#)) does not mean simply to have knowledge of something. To know by experiencing. Describes an intimate knowing (used of a man knowing a woman).

**Wisdom** (02451) ([chokmah](#)) is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. It is not just theoretical knowledge but shows itself practical in a proper discernment between good and evil or right and wrong. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **catham** with the Greek word **sophia** meaning is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Sophia** emphasizes understanding of ultimate things—such as life and death, God and man, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time.

**Wisdom** is the know how to apply God's truth to our life. **Wisdom** is proper use of knowledge in daily living. **Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and follow the best course of action. Wisdom is application of knowledge. Wisdom is the ability to respond correctly to life's situations. Knowledge is the mental possession of powers of perceiving objects, **wisdom** is the power of right reasoning concerning them and forming right decisions accordingly. **Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

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## We Can't Fool God

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts. — Psalm 51:6

Today's Scripture: Matthew 23:13-28

What sin did Jesus condemn more than any other sin? Hypocrisy—especially the flagrant, self-congratulatory kind practiced by the religious leaders of His day.

Religious hypocrites are unspiritual shams. They are trying to gain a reputation for spirituality by playing the role of God-lovers intent on obeying His law. They are unholy fakes who try to fool people—but they can't fool God.

In a convocation address, Luther Smith, a professor at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, warned against the danger of "faking it"—pretending to be something we are not. He mentioned that he had seen a bumper sticker that read, "Jesus is coming. Look busy."

Although we may look busy, we can't fool God about our faith, our character, or our service. Like the Pharisees, whom Jesus denounced (Mt. 23:13-28), we may appear to be sincerely religious. But the Lord knows if our profession is merely a facade without saving trust or genuine devotion.

Are you a churchgoing hypocrite, depending on your own good works to gain entrance into heaven? Or are you trusting God's grace and relying on Christ?

You can't fool God. It's not enough to look busy. By: Vernon Grounds

God sees our ways and knows our hearts,  
From Him we cannot hide;  
External righteousness can't save,  
For He knows what's inside.  
—Sper

A hypocrite is a person who is not himself on Sunday.

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**Plausible Deniability** - Answering media charges of scandal and impropriety, the guilty politician responded with the plea, "I have no recollection of those events." It was yet another attempt of a public figure to apply a strategy called "plausible deniability." This is when individuals try to create a personal safety net for themselves by seeking to convince others that they had no knowledge of the events in question. Someone else gets blamed and becomes the scapegoat for the guilty person's wrongs.

Sometimes Christians have their own kind of plausible deniability. We claim ignorance of our wrong behavior, rationalize, or blame others—but God knows the truth. The Bible tells us: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1Sa 16:7). This is true whether the heart is pure or if it's a corrupt heart robed in false claims of innocence. We may fool others who see us only on the outside, but God sees the reality of our hearts—whether good or bad.

It is wise, therefore, to humbly confess our faults to the Lord. He desires that we admit the truth (Ps 51:6). The only way to escape

the sin and restore our fellowship with God is to acknowledge and confess it to Him (Ps 51:3, 4). — by Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, be merciful to me;  
My sin has grieved Your heart;  
And strengthen my resolve, O Lord,  
From evil to depart.  
—D. De Haan

**We may successfully fool others,  
but God knows our hearts**

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**Honest With God** - The editors of the newspaper admitted they had not reported the facts accurately. In a correction, they cleared the name of a person they had linked to a criminal case.

Truth is as basic to life as it is to news reporting. Without it, there is moral confusion. Without truth, good things are called bad, and bad things good. Without truth, criminals receive credit for being honorable, and honorable persons are treated as criminals.

It shouldn't be any surprise, therefore, that God wants us to be truthful. And it shouldn't be a surprise that the Lord was pleased with David when he confessed his adultery, his conspiracy to kill, and his coverup. It was right for David to tell the truth—to call wrong "wrong." Only then could he be rightly concerned about how his sin had reflected on the name and reputation of God.

What about us? Have we been honest with God? Have we pleased Him by setting the record straight about our sin? Have we, like David, confessed it to the Father? Only when we do this can we recover our honor and once again enjoy the blessings of our salvation (Ps. 51:12). God desires "truth in the inward parts" (Ps 51:6)—and that means calling wrong "**wrong**." — by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Don't hide your sin and cover up,  
Pretending that there's nothing wrong;  
Instead, confess it and repent  
And God will fill your heart with song.  
—Sper

**We have to face our sins  
before we can put them behind us.**

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**We Can't Fool God** - What sin did Jesus condemn more than any other sin? Hypocrisy—especially the flagrant, self-congratulatory kind practiced by the religious leaders of His day.

Religious hypocrites are unspiritual shams. They are trying to gain a reputation for spirituality by playing the role of God-lovers intent on obeying His law. They are unholy fakes who try to fool people—but they can't fool God.

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Are you a churchgoing hypocrite, depending on your own good works to gain entrance into heaven? Or are you trusting God's grace and relying on Christ? You can't fool God. It's not enough to look busy. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God sees our ways and knows our hearts,  
From Him we cannot hide;  
External righteousness can't save,



For He knows what's inside.

—Sper

**A hypocrite is a person who is not himself on Sunday.**

**Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

BGT Psalm 50:9 ἀντιε ς με σσ π κὰ καθαρῖσ σομαι πλυνε ς με κα π ρ χι να λευκανθ σομαι

LXE Psalm 51:7 Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be purified: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

KJV Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

NET Psalm 51:7 Sprinkle me with water and I will be pure; wash me and I will be whiter than snow.

CSB Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

ESV Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

NIV Psalm 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

NLT Psalm 51:7 Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

NRS Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

NJB Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop till I am clean, wash me till I am whiter than snow.

NAB Psalm 51:9 Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure; wash me, make me whiter than snow.

YLT Psalm 51:7 Thou cleansest me with hyssop and I am clean, Washest me, and than snow I am whiter.

GWN Psalm 51:7 Purify me from sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

BBE Psalm 51:7 Make me free from sin with hyssop: let me be washed whiter than snow.

RSV Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

NKJ Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

ASV Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

DBY Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

BHT Psalm 51:9 TüHa††ü´ë°nî bü´ëzôb wü´e†här TükaBBüsë°nî ümišše°leg ´alBîn

NIRV Psalm 51:7 Make me pure by sprinkling me with hyssop plant. Then I will be clean. Wash me. Then I will be whiter than snow.

RWB Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

WEB Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

- Purge: Lev 14:4-7,49-52 Nu 19:18-20 Heb 9:19
- and: Heb 9:13,14 1Jn 1:7 Rev 1:5
- whiter: Isa 1:18 Eph 5:26,27 Rev 7:13,14

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 12:22 “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

Leviticus 14:4-6 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. 5““The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6““As for the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water.

Numbers 19:18 'A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave.

**Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean - Hyssop** was employed like a brush in various purification ceremonies in the Old Testament

**Bob Roe** - He pleads with God to cleanse him. He uses an interesting term with hyssop. Hyssop was the little bush they used to dip in the blood and sprinkle things in the ceremony of cleansing. One of the things they would sprinkle was a cleansed leper. Once the leprosy had been dealt with and was no longer infectious, the leper could go to a priest and go through a ceremonial cleansing. The priest would dip the hyssop in blood and sprinkle him with blood seven times. It was symbolic that he was clean before God. Scarred, yes. He may have the leper's complete whiteness. He may have lost fingers, but he was clean before God. David compared to the purity of God sees himself kind of as a leper, but he knows even a scarred leper when he is clean is accepted. A cleansed leper would still be a scarred person. A cleansed David is still a scarred person, and he sees himself as a leper here.

**Purify me with hyssop** - This picture suggests that David is alluding to the OT practice describing the law dealing with the cleansing of lepers. Moses records this ritual in Leviticus 14...

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and **hyssop** for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6 As for the live bird, he shall take it, together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. 7 He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. 8 The one to be cleansed shall then wash (kabac) his clothes and shave off all his hair, and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. (Lev 14:1-8)

**Brug comments:** The application of blood with hyssop symbolized the cleansing that David received in reality by the application of the blood of Christ to him before the throne of God. (The People's Bible)

David may also have been alluding to the OT practice of purification of anyone who had touched a dead body

Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. 'Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. 'A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave. 'Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening. (Nu 19:16-19)

Note that the effect of hyssop on the leper and the one who had touched a dead body was that both were considered clean thereafter. This is the sum and substance of what David so deeply desired from God. And while he may not have fully understood it, these OT rituals were pale pictures of the purifying power of the blood of Christ (Col 2:16, 17-note), Who would one day come from the line of David (Mt 1:1) and provide the once for all sacrifice (Heb 9:28-note, Heb 10:10-note). We see this concept that OT sins like those of David (which otherwise warranted his death) were atoned for on Calvary. It was as if David received cleansing on credit, with Christ's blood ultimately paying the bill. (see Ro 3:25-note, Heb 9:15-note)

**David Jeremiah** commenting on **hyssop** notes that...Purity, as we know, was a crucial issue to the Jews. The law required that when a person came into contact with a corpse, he had to be ceremoniously cleansed with hyssop. David is thinking of Uriah. He has been dealing in death, and he must be cleaned to satisfy the fullest demands of the law. ([Slaying the Giants in Your Life](#))

**Chuck Smith**...When in Egypt they were to sprinkle the blood upon the lintels of the doorposts of the house, they used the hyssop bush in the sprinkling of the blood. And so, because it was the little bush that was used to sprinkle the blood, he said, "Purge me with hyssop." That would be referring to the blood of the sacrifice. "And I shall be clean." ([Chuck Smith](#))

**Barrick** adds that...**Hyssop** was a small plant that grew in rocky crevices in Palestine. Perhaps the Syrian marjoram (*Origanum syriacum*), a fragrant grey-leaved wiry-stemmed herb, 7-12 inches high, with small white flowers. The plant was employed like a

brush in various purification ceremonies in the Old Testament: Exodus 12:22, Leviticus 14:4-6, Numbers 19:18. ([Ps 51 Notes](#))

**J R Miller**... "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." In certain ancient ceremonies, the blood was sprinkled with a hyssop branch. We may not be able to read into this prayer all the New Testament teaching about Christ's sacrifice, and yet the idea is certainly present, and for us means cleansing of Christ's blood. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**Charles Horne** comments that... He therefore petitions, in this verse, for the purification which comes from God only, through the one great propitiatory sacrifice, by the Holy Spirit; and which was foreshown under the law, by the ceremony of sprinkling the unclean person with a bunch of hyssop, dipped in the "water of separation." This rite is described, Nu 19 and explained, Heb 9:13,14. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." From the latter part of the verse (**whiter than snow**) we learn, that, by grace and mercy, the pardoned penitent is arrayed in garments no less pure and splendid than those of innocence itself. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**Purify** and **wash** are both in the imperfect mood expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete. The **imperfect** adds colour and movement by suggesting the "process" preliminary to its completion.

**J N Darby** comments regarding **purify me**... There is the blessed consciousness, that, when the Lord washes us, we are clean every whit, whiter than snow. A blessed thought to be clean before His eyes: how little believed, because men do not believe in His washing! ([Practical Reflections on the Psalms - Book 2](#))

**Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.** - It is interesting that although snow is wonderfully white, at the center of each snowflake is a grain of dirt. David desires to be whiter than a snowflake! Whiteness symbolizes moral purity that results from divine forgiveness (Isa 1:18+).

**Kidner** sees these words of David as "a flash of realization that with God there are no half-measures (**Ed**: That is, snow is about as white as one can achieve but David wants cleansing that surpasses that whiteness!) (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Spurgeon**... None but thyself can whiten me, but thou canst in grace outdo nature itself in its purest state. Snow soon gathers smoke and dust, it melts and disappears; thou canst give me an enduring purity. Though snow is white below as well as on the outer surface, thou canst work the like inward purity in me, and make me so clean that only an hyperbole can set forth my immaculate condition. Lord, do this; my faith believes thou wilt, and well she knows thou canst. Scarcely does Holy Scripture contain a verse more full of faith than this. Considering the nature of the sin, and the deep sense the psalmist had of it, it is a glorious faith to be able to see in the blood sufficient, nay, all sufficient merit entirely to purge it away. Considering also the deep natural inbred corruption which David saw and experienced within, it is a miracle of faith that he could rejoice in the hope of perfect purity in his inward parts. Yet, be it added, the faith is no more than the word warrants, than the blood of atonement encourages, than the promise of God deserves. O that some reader may take heart, even now while smarting under sin, to do the Lord the honour to rely thus confidently on the finished sacrifice of Calvary and the infinite mercy there revealed. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 7 - Treasury of David](#))

**Spurgeon** - David felt that sin was a very great defilement, — that he was black and filthy; but he knew how he himself had often, when hunted like a wild goat among the mountains, stooped down to a cooling brook, and washed away the dust and stain of travel in the running water, and his face and hands had been clean again; and so, bowing down before God, he sees, in the sacrifice of Christ, a cleansing flood, and his desire is expressed in these words, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The words do not require any exposition; they require application. They do not need to be explained; they need to be offered up to God in prayer by brokenhearted suppliants. ([Psalm 51:7 The Guilt and the Cleansing](#))

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**Purify** ([02398](#)) (**chata'**) means to to sin or miss the way, but here means to purify from uncleanness or from sin.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the verb **rhantizo** in this verse for the Hebrew verb **chata'**. **Rhantizo** means to sprinkle a liquid on something or someone and was used by the writer of Hebrews in his allusions to the OT rituals (in Heb 9:13-note. The related word "**rhantismos**" is used in Heb 9:19-note and Heb 9:21-note)

**Clean (same verb Ps 51:2)** ([02891](#)) (**taher**) means to make pure and is found most often in Leviticus where it describes ritual cleansing of either things or persons (Lev 14:48, 16:19, 22:7).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the verb **katharizo** (**word study**) in this verse for the Hebrew verb **taher**.. **Katharizo** is from **katharos** = pure, clean, without stain or spot and gives us our English words catharsis (emotional or physical purging), cathartic (substance used to induce a purging) and Cathar (member of a medieval sect which sought the purging of evil from its members). **Katharizo** means to make clean by taking away an undesirable part. To cleanse from filth or impurity. Figuratively **katharizo** refers to cleansing

from ritual contamination or impurity as in (Acts 10:15). In a similar sense *katharizo* is used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al) Another figurative use in 1John 1:9 (cf James 4:8, Hebrews 10:2) describes the purifying or cleansing from sin and a guilty conscience thus making one acceptable to God and reestablishing fellowship. To cause to become clean as from physical stains and dirt (Mt 23:25). This word group conveys the idea of physical, religious, and moral cleanness or purity in such senses as clean, free from stains or shame, and free from adulteration.

**Wash (same verb Ps 51:2) (03526) (kabac/kabas)** means to wash (especially clothes), to make clean and soft by trampling (this is the root meaning of *kabac*), by treading, by kneading or by beating clothes in cold water. **Kabac** was always used of clothing, "to launder" and never of "washing" the body. Most uses of **kabac** have to do with washing of clothes which have become contaminated in one way or another (28x). Particularly important contaminants would be leprosy. **Kabac** is found first time in Ge 49:11 as part of Jacob's blessing on Judah "He washes his garments in wine" (This is a prophecy related to the "lion of the tribe of Judah", the Messiah, Who will rule over kingdom during the Millennium [description of this golden age to come], which will be such a prosperous time that wine [a symbol of prosperity and blessing in this passage] will be as commonplace as wash water!)

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **kabac/kabas** with the verb **pluno** which means to wash something other than a body part, such as washing of clothes. **Pluno** for example describes the saints in heaven as those who "have **washed** their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14-[note](#)) clearly speaking of spiritual cleansing which is David's desire also.

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**James L Nicholson** put the cry of David's heart to music in his great hymn...

### **WHITER THAN SNOW**

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

***Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow.  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.***

Lord Jesus, let nothing unholy remain,  
Apply Thine own blood and extract ev'ry stain;  
To get this blest cleansing, I all things forego—  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies,  
And help me to make a complete sacrifice.  
I give up myself, and whatever I know,  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,  
I wait, blessèd Lord, at Thy crucified feet.  
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait,  
Come now, and within me a new heart create;  
To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidst "No,"  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

The blessing by faith, I receive from above;  
O glory! my soul is made perfect in love;  
My prayer has prevailed, and this moment I know,  
The blood is applied, I am whiter than snow.

#### ***Refrain***

## Play the Youtube song [Whiter than the snow](#)

Whiter than the snow  
Purer than the clearest stream  
Wash me and I'll be  
Bathed in purity  
I long to feel clean

A robe of righteousness  
A robe that I could not afford  
My Lord you paid the sacrifice  
Your perfect sacrifice  
Has covered up my shame

And so I thank You Jesus  
For the sweet forgiveness of the Cross  
It's a mystery  
To amaze even angels  
That when Father looks into my heart  
He sees me now as whiter than snow.

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### QUESTION - [What does it mean to be "whiter than snow" \(Psalm 51:7\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - *Whiter than snow* figuratively expresses the condition of one who has received [God's forgiveness](#), cleansing from sin, and redemption.

King David wrote Psalm 51 during his blackest hour of self-awareness after committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband, Uriah. In this fourth "[penitential psalm](#)," we find David in sincere repentance and confession of sin (Psalm 51:3–5). Believing God abounds in mercy, David makes this earnest plea: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7, ESV).

[Hyssop](#) was a small shrub used in the ceremonial cleansing of lepers under the Old Testament law. It was dipped in the sacrificial blood of an animal and sprinkled seven times on the person needing purification (Leviticus 14:6–7). David referred to hyssop symbolically in Psalm 51 to communicate his longing to be purified of sin. God's forgiveness would make him "whiter than snow," spiritually speaking.

David acknowledged that he had been deeply stained by sin, comparing himself to a filthy garment needing to be washed thoroughly. Only the most potent remedy could cleanse him. David even tracked his iniquity back to its source, the corruption of original sin: "For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5, NLT).

David's prayer then turned to restoration and renewal. It was as though David could hear the forthcoming cry of God's heart through the prophet Isaiah: "Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways" (Isaiah 1:16, NLT). So David pleaded with the Lord, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," foreshadowing Isaiah's words, "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool" (Isaiah 1:16–18, NLT).

David's prayer to be washed and made whiter than snow prefigured "the greater, more perfect" appropriation of God's grace, forgiveness, and salvation made available through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: "So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins" (Hebrews 9:11–14, NLT).

We may consider our transgressions to be worse than David's, but there are no sins that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot cleanse. Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of Christians who became the great apostle Paul, was told by Ananias at his conversion, "Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins by calling on His name" (Acts 22:16, HCSB). The apostle John affirmed, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7–9).

Like every Christian, we have flaws and must repent and draw near to the Lord in our blackest moments of failure, asking Christ “who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood” (Revelation 1:5) to forgive us and wash our guilt-stained souls whiter than snow (Hebrews 10:19–23).

The book of Revelation describes a group of redeemed people as those who “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). It is through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross—the shedding of His blood—that we are redeemed and rescued from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13, 20; Ephesians 1:7). David, Paul, and John will undoubtedly be among the “thousands upon thousands” worshipping around the throne dressed in robes washed whiter than snow. Together with them, we will join in the thundering chorus, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! . . . To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” (Revelation 5:11–13). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## **Diamond Dust**

Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7

Today's Scripture & Insight: Isaiah 1:18-20; Psalm 51:7

During a bitterly frigid winter in our part of Michigan, there were many mixed emotions about the weather. As the snowy winter season pressed on into March, most people had long before fallen out of love with snow and were bemoaning long-range forecasts of low temperatures.

Yet the majestic beauty of the snow continued to amaze me. Even as I threw endless shovelfuls of it from my driveway onto the over-my-head snowbanks, I was enthralled with the white stuff. One particular day, ice crystals filtered down from the sky to fall atop old snow. As my wife and I took a walk through this sparkling scene, it looked as if diamond dust had been sprinkled across the landscape.

In Scripture, snow seems to have varied purposes. God sends it as an indicator of His creative greatness (Job 37:6; 38:22-23). Snow-capped mountains irrigate the arid valleys below. But more significantly, God gives snow as a picture of our forgiveness. The gospel of Jesus provides a way for us to be cleansed of our sins and for our hearts to be made much “whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7; Isa. 1:18).

The next time you see snow—in life or in photos—thank God for the forgiveness and the freedom from sin’s penalties that this beautiful, natural gift pictures for all who have put their trust in our Savior. By: Dave Branon

Thank You for forgiving us and for turning our filthiness into the beauty of forgiveness. Help us to display the beauty of our forgiveness to all we encounter.

When Christ forgives us, our hearts are as clean as new-fallen snow.

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**David's Lament** - You may already know the story. King David, Israel’s most illustrious ruler, the man after God’s own heart, became the seducer, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer—utterly pitiless and unmoved by his monstrous misdeeds. Israel’s ruler was now ruled by sin.

A year had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband. David deteriorated physically and emotionally. His gnawing conscience kept him restless and melancholy. At night he tossed and turned.

When David was brought face to face with his corruption, his defenses crumbled. He cried, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2Samuel 12:13). And Nathan the prophet replied, “The Lord also has put away your sin.” Despite the devastating consequences of David’s sin, he was assured of God’s forgiveness.

After realizing the extent of his sin and its consequences, David penned Psalm 51, a song of repentance and pleading for God’s forgiveness. “I acknowledge my transgressions... Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps 51:3,7).

Are you suffering the consequences of sin? Admit your wrongs and ask God to cleanse your heart. He will show mercy and restore your joy if you turn to Him. — by David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread](http://OurDailyBread.com), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Our sinfulness can sap our joy  
And make us feel far from the Lord;  
Confession and repentance, though,

Provide the way to be restored.

—Sper

**Repentance means hating sin enough to turn from it.**

**Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.**

BGT Psalm 50:10 κούτιε ς με γαλλ ασιν κα ε φροσ νην γαλλι σονται στ τεταπεινωμ να

LXE Psalm 51:8 Thou shalt cause me to hear gladness and joy: the afflicted bones shall rejoice.

KJV Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

NET Psalm 51:8 Grant me the ultimate joy of being forgiven! May the bones you crushed rejoice!

CSB Psalm 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice.

ESV Psalm 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

NIV Psalm 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

NLT Psalm 51:8 Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me-- now let me rejoice.

NRS Psalm 51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

NJB Psalm 51:8 Let me hear the sound of joy and gladness, and the bones you have crushed will dance.

NAB Psalm 51:10 Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

YLT Psalm 51:8 Thou causest me to hear joy and gladness, Thou makest joyful bones Thou hast bruised.

GWN Psalm 51:8 Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken dance.

BBE Psalm 51:8 Make me full of joy and rapture; so that the bones which have been broken may be glad.

RSV Psalm 51:8 Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice.

NKJ Psalm 51:8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

ASV Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

DBY Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear gladness and joy; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

BHT Psalm 51:10 Tašmî`ênî SâSôn wûSimHâ Tägê<sup>9</sup>lnâ `ácâmôt DiKKî<sup>9</sup>tâ

NIRV Psalm 51:8 Let me hear you say, "Your sins are forgiven." That will bring me joy and gladness. Let the body you have broken be glad.

RWB Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

WEB Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; {that} the bones {which} thou hast broken may rejoice.

- **Make:** Ps 13:5 30:11 119:81,82 126:5,6 Mt 5:4
- **bones:** Ps 6:2,3 Ps 38:3 Job 5:17,18 Isa 57:15-18 Ho 6:1,2 Lu 4:18 Ac 2:37-41 16:29-34

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Psalm 38:3<sup>±</sup> There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; There is no health in my bones because of my sin.

Spurgeon - Mental depression tells upon the bodily frame; it is enough to create and foster every disease, and is in itself the most painful of all diseases. Soul sickness tells upon the entire frame; it weakens the body, and then bodily weakness reacts upon the mind. One drop of divine anger sets the whole of our blood boiling with misery. *Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.* Deeper still the malady penetrates, till the bones, the more solid parts of the system, are affected. No soundness and no rest are

two sad deficiencies; yet these are both consciously gone from every awakened conscience until Jesus gives relief. God's anger is a fire that dries up the very marrow; it searches the secret parts of the belly. A man who has pain in his bones tosses to and fro in search of rest, but he finds none; he becomes worn out with agony, and in so many cases a sense of sin creates in the conscience a horrible unrest which cannot be exceeded in anguish except by hell itself.

Psalm 32:3-5 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

**Spurgeon's Note** - David now gives us his own experience: no instructor is so efficient as one who testifies to what he has personally known and felt. He writes well who like the spider spins his matter out of his own bowels.

**Verse 3.** *When I kept silence.* When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, *my bones*, those solid pillars of my frame, the stronger portions of my bodily constitution, *waxed old*, began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease! A fire in the bones! While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly. *Through my roaring all the day long.* He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled to hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None knows the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

**Verse 4.** *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.* God's finger can crush us—what must his hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. *My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. *Selah.* It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

**Verse 5.** *I acknowledged my sin unto thee.* After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we double deserve punishment. *And mine iniquity have I not hid.* We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. *I said.* This was his fixed resolution. *I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.* Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read, *And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin. *Selah.* Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,



Ask, O why such love to me?  
Grace has put me in the number  
Of the Saviour's family.  
Hallelujah!  
Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee."

## THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH

**Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.** - NET = "Grant me the ultimate joy of being forgiven" He wants to be out from under the crushing weight of sin and guilt and back singing joyfully to the Lord. His words are a beautiful illustration of the mark of true repentance. Unconfessed sin is a "joy stealer." You can see it on a person's countenance. You can hear it in the words they say. Sin does unspeakably terrible damage to our lives, not just our spiritual lives but our physical lives! Notice the verb "hear" which teaches us that not only did David's sin cause "eye disease" (which was the incipient cause of his spiritual malady - 2Sa 11:2+), but it causes "ear disease," which would have been especially sad for David who had a musical ear that prompted penning of some of the most beautiful music ever written! Sin shut down his musical ear and it is almost certain that he penned no psalms during the 9-12 months when he covered his sin, thus proving the truth of Pr 28:13+ which says he who covers his sin will not prosper! Of course another reason he could not write an inspired song was because he had grieved the Spirit Who Alone could inspire the song he wrote!

**THOUGHT** - Has your "eye disease" also caused "ear disease" and "heart disease?" That's what unconfessed sin will inevitably do! Let us not be deceived (one of the horrible effects of SIN! see Heb 3:13+). God is not mocked and whatever we sow, we will reap, either fruit of corruption if we sow to the flesh or fruit of the Spirit, eternal life (and joy), if we sow to the Spirit. Amen? Amen! (Gal 6:7-8+, cf Hos 8:7a).

David's plea clearly indicates that unless God does a work of grace in our heart we cannot **hear** true **joy and gladness**. The result of full forgiveness by God is supernatural, Spirit enabled full joy and gladness which takes the place of the fear and guilt (and that horrible sense of estrangement and loss of fellowship with our Father) caused by unconfessed sin. Unholy simply does not mix with holy. The message? Keep as short accounts on your sin ledger as possible, by quickly, sincerely confessing! As an aside while you cannot lose your salvation, you can sure lose your joy. Sin quenches and grieves the Holy Spirit Who is the sole Source of supernatural joy, which is joy independent of one's circumstances (Gal 5:22+, Ro 15:13+). If you've lost your joy, consider the possibility of some unconfessed sin. Remember joy is supernatural fruit borne by the Spirit, so if the Spirit is not grieved or quenched, you should be experiencing joy. If not a good prayer to pray is...

**Search** (imperative as are all verbs in red) me, O God, and **know** my heart; **try** me and **know** my anxious thoughts; and **see** if there be any hurtful way in me, and **lead** me in the everlasting way. (Ps 139:23, 24+)

Comment: If your ears are not hearing joy and gladness, the problem may not be around you but within you. Your heart may need to be cleansed and tuned once again to the music of God and the harmony of heaven, so that everything you hear reminds you of the Lord.

The two requests in this verse are both in the **imperfect mood** a mood which expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete. The **imperfect** adds colour and movement by suggesting the "process" preliminary to its completion.

**NET note** on **joy and gladness** - Heb "cause me to hear happiness and joy." The language is **metonymic**: the effect of forgiveness (joy) has been substituted for its cause. The psalmist probably alludes here to an assuring word from God announcing that his sins are forgiven (a so-called oracle of forgiveness). The imperfect verbal form is used here to express the psalmist's wish or request. The synonyms "happiness" and "joy" are joined together as a hendiadys to emphasize the degree of joy he anticipates.

**Kidner** notes that Ps 51:8 "with its echo of verse 1, completes the first part of the psalm, in which the emphasis has been mostly on guilt and its cleansing. Now the centre of gravity will move to salvation. (Borrow [Psalms 1-72 : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Let the bones which You have broken rejoice**- ([See note](#) on Ps 38:3 above) **NET** = "May the bones you crushed rejoice" The New English Bible gives us a sense of what David is saying = 'let the bones dance which thou hast broken.'

**NET note** - *May the bones you crushed rejoice*. The psalmist compares his sinful condition to that of a person who has been physically battered and crushed. Within this metaphorical framework, his "bones" are the seat of his emotional strength.

**Bob Roe** - A truly repentant person exhibits thankfulness with no resentment or bitterness. They justify God. They agree with God, "That was necessary in my life," knowing that God only does what is necessary to accomplish his purpose. David is that way. He has been promised by God that the sword will never depart from his house, that his own wives will be raped in front of all of Israel. He is

going to have nothing but tumult for the rest of his reign. The child born of this illicit union is going to die. God has told him all these things and has also given him the squeeze for at least one whole year, and he knows it is from God, "The bones which YOU have broken."

**Matthew Henry** comments that this "Great rejoicing contains more than an inward placid serenity of mind or sensation of comfort. It will show itself in the countenance and conduct, but especially in praise and gratitude.

**Adrian Rogers** - Sin "sickens the body....What he's saying is, "God, you have me under extreme pressure." **The bones which thou hast broken.**" It's almost as if God has David in his hand, and God is just squeezing the life out of David. Sometimes people think, "Well, if we sin, God will just cast us off." Oh no, he squeezes all the tighter; that's the thing. He's saying, "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." There's incredible pressure. Now if you keep that pressure on for a long time, it's going to make you sick....Now sickness is a very complicated thing, and there are many reasons for sickness. But one of the reasons for sickness is sin in the life of a child of God. One of the proof texts for that is 1 Corinthians 11:30+....And so if you've lost your joy, no wonder you might get sick—because "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." (Proverbs 17:22) Did you know that when you are right with God, you stand straighter? Did you know that when you are right with God, you smile more? Did you know that when you are right with God, you sleep better? Did you know that when you are right with God, you digest your food better? I'm just telling you, friend, that a merry heart is one of the best medicines you can take. But you can't have that joy of the Lord if you are a backslider walking away from God. Here is David, a child of God, and he is perfectly miserable. ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**What would bring joy and gladness?** Clearly in context it would be God's forgiveness, which is worth "jumping for joy!"

**Warren Wiersbe**...David's ears were open to the music of heaven—but not in this psalm. David heard sorrow and sadness. The choir was off-key. Everything he heard was wrong. We, too, have days like that. When we are not right on the inside, nothing is going to be right on the outside. ([See full devotional on Ps 51:7-9 What Do You Hear?](#))

**Charles Horne** comments...Next to the blessing of forgiveness, is to be desired that joy and comfort in the conscience, which forgiveness only can inspire: the effect of this, in repairing the vigour of the spirit, decayed through sorrow and anguish, is compared to setting broken bones, and restoring them again to perfect strength. At the resurrection of the body, this petition will be granted in a literal sense, when the "bones" that are mouldered into dust, shall "rejoice and flourish as an herb." —Isa. lxvi. 14 ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

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**Make me to hear** ([08085](#)) (**shama'** used >1000x in OT) conveys the basic idea of perceiving a message or a sound.

**Joy** ([08342](#)) (**sason**) almost universally it speaks of human happiness and abounding delight. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sason** with the Greek word **agalliasis** (see study of **agalliao**) which describes great exultation or extreme joy (He 1:9+) ("jump for joy!")

**Sason** - 22x - Esther 8:16f; Ps 45:7; 51:8, 12; 105:43; 119:111; Isa 12:3; 22:13; 35:10; 51:3, 11; 61:3; Jer 7:34; 15:16; 16:9; 25:10; 31:13; 33:9, 11; Joel 1:12; Zech 8:19. **NAS** = gaiety(1), gladness(3), joy(15), joyously(1), rejoicing(2).

**Gladness** ([08057](#)) (**simchah**) is from a root **s-m-h** and denotes being glad or joyful with the whole disposition as indicated by its association with the heart (Ex 4:14; Ps 19:8; 104:15; 105:3), with the soul (Ps 86:4), with the lighting up of the eyes (Pr 15:30). It should not surprise us to discover that the Lord and his salvation is cited most frequently as the reason for joy (2Chr 20:27; Ps 5:11; 9:2; 16:9; 32:11; 40:16 63:11 64:10 ; 86:4; 90:15; 92:4) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sason** with the Greek word **euphrosune** (from **eu** = well + **phren** = mind) which means joy or gladness.

**Simchah** - 87x - Gen 31:27; Num 10:10; Deut 28:47; Jdg 16:23; 1 Sam 18:6; 2 Sam 6:12; 1 Kgs 1:40; 1 Chr 12:40; 15:16, 25; 29:17, 22; 2Chr 20:27; 23:18; 29:30; 30:21, 23, 26; Ezra 3:12f; 6:22; Neh 8:12, 17; 12:27, 43f; Esther 8:16f; 9:17ff, 22; Job 20:5; Ps 4:7; 16:11; 21:6; 30:11; 43:4; 45:15; 51:8; 68:3; 97:11; 100:2; 106:5; 137:3, 6; Pr 10:28; 12:20; 14:10, 13; 15:21, 23; 21:15, 17; Eccl 2:1f, 10, 26; 5:20; 7:4; 8:15; 9:7; Song 3:11; Isa 9:3; 16:10; 22:13; 24:11; 29:19; 30:29; 35:10; 51:3, 11; 55:12; 61:7; 66:5; Jer 7:34; 15:16; 16:9; 25:10; 31:7; 33:11; 48:33; Ezek 36:5; Joel 1:16; Jonah 4:6; Zeph 3:17; Zech 8:19. **NAS** = delight(1), exceeding joy(1), extremely\*(1), festival(1), gladness(34), happiness(1), joy(38), mirth(1), pleasure(6), rejoice(1), rejoiced(1), rejoicing(6).

**Broken** ([01794](#)) (**dakah**) means to crush, break in pieces, smash or crush down into pieces; to hammer or beat out, such as metal into thin pieces. **Dakah** is used figuratively in this passage to describe David as crushed, beaten down, bruised emotionally and spiritually as is proper in one who is weighed down by sin or in one who senses his guilt and recognizes that his sin is clearly against a holy and loving God. This same verb describes a **broken... heart** in Ps 51:17.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **dakah** with the Greek word **tapeinoo (word study)** which literally means to make low (to level off a mountain), to bring one to a lower place in order to abase or humble. The perfect tense indicates this the Psalmist's fixed condition.

**Dakah** - 5x - Ps 10:10; 38:8; 44:19; 51:8, 17. NAS = broken(1), contrite(1), crouches(1), crushed(2).

**Rejoice (01523) (gil)** is an interesting Hebrew verb for the basic idea is to spin or circle around (under influence of any violent emotion) , from which such ideas as "to circle in joy" are readily derived. It pictures vigorous, enthusiastic expressions of joy.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **gil** with the Greek verb **agalliao [word study]**, (**agalliao** is from **agan** = much + **hallomai** = jump; gush, leap, spring up), means literally to "jump much", "leap for joy", skip and jump with happy excitement and so to be exceedingly joyful, overjoyed or exuberantly happy. The idea is this person shows their excessive, ecstatic joy by leaping and skipping. It describes jubilant exultation, a quality of joy that remains unhindered and unchanged by what happens. In the NT, **agalliao** describes an exceeding joy (independent of circumstances that might otherwise not be associated with joy) which is initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. **Agalliao** appears to be used always with the connotation of a religious joy, a joy that springs from the contemplation of God or God's salvation. **Agalliao** includes not just the experiencing of a state of great joy and gladness, but often is accompanied by audible, verbal expression and appropriate visible body movement (i.e., "jump for joy") Another verb meaning to **rejoice** (**chairo**) is more expressive of the inward feeling of joy. **Barclay** writes that **agalliao** - is the joy which leaps for joy. As it has been put, it is the joy of the climber who has reached the summit, and who leaps for joy that the mountain path is conquered.

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## Broken Bones

Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. —Psalm 51:8

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:1-13

Years ago, I played collegiate soccer as a goalkeeper. It was more fun than I can describe here, but all that fun came at a hefty price—one I continue to pay today. Being a goalie means that you are constantly throwing your body into harm's way to prevent the other team from scoring, often resulting in injuries. During the course of one season, I suffered a broken leg, several cracked ribs, a separated shoulder, and a concussion! Today, especially on cold days, I am visited by painful reminders of those broken bones.

David also had reminders of broken bones, but his injuries were spiritual, not physical. After David's moral collapse involving an affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, God firmly disciplined him. But then David turned to Him in repentance and prayed, "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice" (Ps. 51:8).

God's chastening was so crushing that David felt like his bones were broken. Yet he trusted that the God of grace could both repair his brokenness and rekindle his joy. In our own failure and sin, it's a comfort to know that God loves us enough to pursue and restore us with His loving discipline. By: Bill Crowder

Father, open my eyes to see my failings, open my heart to receive Your discipline, and open my will to embrace Your loving purposes. When I fall, I pray that You will make me whole and restore my joy in You.

God's hand of discipline is a hand of love.

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**Repenting And Rejoicing** - A Christian woman asked another believer how he was doing. With a broad smile he replied, "Repenting and rejoicing, sister!"

I believe this man was walking in a spirit of repentance—daily confessing and turning from sins and rejoicing in God's forgiveness.

Because honest repentance involves sorrow, we may forget that repenting leads to rejoicing. When we first repent and become new believers, we experience great joy. But if we then choose to live with unconfessed sin, our joy is lost.

David believed his joy could be restored. After pouring out his prayer of repentance to God, he made this humble plea: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). As David turned back to the Lord, his sense of purpose returned: "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You" (Ps 51:13). Through his faith in a forgiving and merciful God, David began rejoicing again in his salvation (Ps 51:14, 15).

Do you sometimes lose the joy of your salvation because you fail to deal with your sins? If you'll confess them, God will forgive you (1Jn 1:9). He'll restore your joy and help you overcome sins that trouble you. That's what it means to be a "repenting and rejoicing" Christian. — by Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we confess our sins to God,  
We're washed as white as snow,  
And He keeps on forgiving us  
Each time to Him we go.  
—Sper

**Conviction makes us sad—  
confession makes us glad.**

## MY BROKEN LEFT HIP MY BROKEN HEART

As I was writing these notes God literally broke my left hip and almost immediately I recognized that what He wanted to do (was doing) was to break my heart. "Little sins" had begun to creep into my life so that I had slowly drifted from the intimate fellowship I once experienced with God. At age 65, He was saying to me in essence "I love you so much, that I am going to give you physical brokenness, that it might bring about spiritual brokenness." Twenty five years earlier He had given me severe arthritis in the same left hip in order to cause me to bow my knee to Him as my Lord and Savior. And now as I entered the last leg of my race, He struck a deeply painful blow to that same left hip, because He wanted to sanctify me. He does not want me to continue to "toy" with "little sins" but to confess them and to walk before Him in holiness, with a heart that is wholly His (cp 2Chr 16:9). This is June, 2011 and I am hearing His voice clearly now, but my greatest fear is that as I recuperate (which will take 90 more days at least to heal the left femoral head) and become physically stronger, I might begin to forget His kindness that has led me to this point of repentance (Ro 2:4-note), and that I might drift into complacency in my daily walk with Him. I pray not. I covet your prayers along that same line. Thank you.

**Psalm 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.**

BGT Psalm 50:11 π στρεψον τ πρ σωπ ν σου π τ ν μαρτι ν μου κα π σας τ ς νομ ας μου ξ λειψον

LXE Psalm 51:9 Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

KJV Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

NET Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins! Wipe away all my guilt!

CSB Psalm 51:9 Turn Your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt.

ESV Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

NIV Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

NLT Psalm 51:9 Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt.

NRS Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

NJB Psalm 51:9 Turn away your face from my sins, and wipe away all my guilt.

NAB Psalm 51:11 Turn away your face from my sins; blot out all my guilt.

YLT Psalm 51:9 Hide Thy face from my sin. And all mine iniquities blot out.

GWN Psalm 51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and wipe out all that I have done wrong.

BBE Psalm 51:9 Let your face be turned from my wrongdoing, and take away all my sins.

RSV Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

NKJ Psalm 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

ASV Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, And blot out all mine iniquities.

DBY Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

BHT Psalm 51:11 hasTēr PānĒkā mēHá†ǎ́äy wū|kol-`áwö⁹nōta⁹y müHĚ

NIRV Psalm 51:9 Take away all of my sins. Wipe away all of the evil things I've done.

RWB Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

WEB Psalm 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

- Hide: Isa 38:17 Jer 16:17 Mic 7:18,19
- blot: Ps 51:1 Col 2:14

**Hide Your face from my sins** The idiom **"to hide the face"** can mean "to ignore" (see Ps 10:11; Ps 13:1; Ps 51:9) or carry the stronger idea of "to reject" (Ps 27:9; Ps 30:7; Ps 88:14).

**Spurgeon...Hide thy face from my sins.** Do not look at them; be at pains not to see them. They thrust themselves in the way; but, Lord, refuse to behold them, lest if thou consider them, thine anger burn, and I die.

**Hide Your face from my sins** - Note David does not want God to hide his face from him but from his sins. In Psalm 27 David wrote...

When Thou didst say, **"Seek My face,"** my heart said to Thee, **"Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek."** **Do not hide Thy face from me,** Do not turn Thy servant away in anger; Thou hast been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! (Ps 27:8, 9)

**Comment:** Not only does God see us, we also see Him. That is what gives us integrity: knowing that we're walking, living, thinking and speaking before the face of God. When we fear Him, we don't have to fear anything else. And when we walk in integrity and honesty, when we flee duplicity and hypocrisy, we can face anything. David was able to face all his foes because he had integrity. He prayed, "Unite my heart to fear Your name" (Ps. 86:11). Integrity unites, so it helps us put our lives together. Today, let's walk in integrity before the face of God. Don't be so concerned with your reputation and conduct that you fail to look after your character, because you cannot hide that from God. How is your character? Are you unified--do you have one heart and one mind to serve one Master? (Warren Wiersbe. Prayer, Praise and Promises)

After **Cain** murdered **Abel**, Cain said...

"Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and **from Thy face I shall be hidden,** and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me." (Ge 4:14)

**And blot out all my iniquities** **David** asked God to apply His divine spot remover to his sins.

**Spurgeon...Blot out all mine iniquities.** He repeats the prayer of the first verse with the enlargement of it by the word "all." All repetitions are not "vain repetitions." Souls in agony have no space to find variety of language: pain has to content itself with monotones. David's face was ashamed with looking on his sin, and no diverting thoughts could remove it from his memory; but he prays the Lord to do with his sin what he himself cannot. If God hide not his face from our sin, he must hide it forever from us; and if he blot not out our sins, he must blot our names out of his book of life.

**Bob Roe** - He seeks the ultimate of spiritual healing which is eyeball-to-eyeball with a Holy God with no sense of shame, and he knows there is no possibility in the law to have that kind of healing. That is one of the hardest thing to get across to people. I do not care what your sin is, if you truly confess it, you can look eyeball-to-eyeball with you God, "who is a Holy God who dwells in light unapproachable and who no man has seen or ever can see" and have no sense of shame. He really means it, my friends, when he says, "if you confess your sins [if you agree with God, that is what it says, if you justify God and not excuse yourself] he will not only forgive your sin, but he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness." A murderer, adulterer, hypocrite for over a year, a man who sent men to their death for the very thing he had done, who led worship while knowing he was hiding sin, if he confesses his sin, God says, "You can look me in the face, eyeball-to-eyeball. I will hide my face from your sins and blot out your iniquities." This is the figure used. It doesn't say God is going to forget them. God can't throw away his mind, but he can give you the ability to grasp what he has done in your life, and you can look eyeball-to-eyeball at him and have no sense of shame for what you have done. He expresses that cleansing here as blotting it out, hiding it from his face, or putting it behind his back in the depths of the sea. God again goes first class. When he forgives, he forgets [These are human terms] and from that point on there should never ever be any shame between you and God over a truly confessed sin no matter what it was.

**My sins... my iniquities** - Again David owns his sin as we all must do. **A W Pink** reminds us that...Now it is the duty of the Christian, and part of the task which God has set him, to see to it that this sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin be not lost. He is to labor daily that his heart be duly affected by the heinousness of self-will and self-love. He is steadfastly to resist every effort of

Satan to make him pity himself, think lightly of wrongdoing, or excuse himself in the same. (Practical Christianity)

**Charles Horne** comments...The soul, still restless and uneasy, reiterates her request, that God would not only cease to behold her iniquity for the present, as a man who turneth away his face from a writing, but that he would not behold it more, as a man who blotteth out what is written, so that it can never be read again. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Through the prophet **Isaiah** God says...

I, even I, am the one who **wipes out** your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.  
(Isaiah 43:25)

I have **wiped out** your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44:22)

**Comment:** God is always willing and waiting to forgive sins, to purge iniquities, and to blot out transgressions. Ultimately He is waiting for us to cry out like David for forgiveness.

**David Jeremiah**...Why blot? Most sins were handled in the manner of transactions. If you committed some offense, you could perform some kind of sacrifice to make atonement. But there were two sins with no remedy: adultery and murder. David had committed both of these, and they were written in God's great book in red letters. There was nothing David could do, no sacrifice to make, no atonement to seek. The accusing page was beyond his reach. All he could do was fall upon the mercy of God to blot out that red ink. Wipe it away completely, Lord! No priest, of course, could do that. Only God had the solvent, then and now. (Slaying the giants in your life)

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**Hide** (imperative) ([05641](#)) (**cathar**) means to hide with the thought of protection, to hide by covering

**Blot out** (imperative) ([04229](#)) (**machah**) (Also used in Ps 51:1) means to stroke or rub, erase, abolish, destroy, wipe out. (First use = Ge 6:7) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates machah with the verb **exaleipho (word study)** which means literally to completely wipe off as when a blackboard is erased. Some of the uses in Scripture retain the literal meaning but most uses speak of a figurative blotting out or wiping off. The idea in all the uses is to cause something to cease by obliterating or eliminating any evidence. A number of uses in both OT (Septuagint) and the NT use this verb to describe the blotting out or wiping away of sins.

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### In Thy Great Loving-Kindness, Lord

In thy great loving-kindness, Lord,  
Be merciful to me;  
In thy compassions great blot out  
All my iniquity.

Oh, wash me thoroughly from sin;  
From all my guilt me cleanse:  
For my transgressions I confess;  
I ever see my sins.

All my iniquities blot out,  
My sin hide from thy view.  
Create a clean heart, Lord, in me  
A spirit right renew.

And from thy gracious presence, Lord,  
Oh, cast me not away;  
Thy Holy Spirit utterly  
Take not from me, I pray.

The joy which thy salvation brings  
Again to me restore;  
With thy free Spirit, oh, do thou  
Upholds me evermore.

BGT Psalm 50:12 καρδὸν καθαρὴν κτίζον ὁ θεὸς καὶ πνεῦμα ἐθελοῦς γκαβισὸν ἐν τοῖς ὕδατι μου

LXE Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts.

KJV Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

NET Psalm 51:10 Create for me a pure heart, O God! Renew a resolute spirit within me!

CSB Psalm 51:10 God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

ESV Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

NIV Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

NLT Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

NRS Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

NJB Psalm 51:10 God, create in me a clean heart, renew within me a resolute spirit,

NAB Psalm 51:12 A clean heart create for me, God; renew in me a steadfast spirit.

YLT Psalm 51:10 A clean heart prepare for me, O God, And a right spirit renew within me.

GWN Psalm 51:10 Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a faithful spirit within me.

BBE Psalm 51:10 Make a clean heart in me, O God; give me a right spirit again.

RSV Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

NKJ Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

ASV Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a right spirit within me.

DBY Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

BHT Psalm 51:12 lēb ṭāhōr Būrā' -lī 'élōhīm wūrū<sup>a</sup>H nākōn HaDDēš BūqirBī

NIRV Psalm 51:10 God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful to you.

RWB Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

WEB Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

- **Create:** 2Co 5:17 Eph 2:10
- **clean:** Ps 73:1 Pr 20:9 Jer 13:27 32:39 Eze 11:19 18:31 36:25-27,37 Mt 5:8 Ac 15:9 1Pe 1:22
- **renew:** Ro 12:2 Eph 4:22-24 Col 3:10 Tit 3:5
- **right:** Ps 78:8,37 Jos 14:14 1Ki 15:3-5 Ac 11:23 1Co 15:58 Jas 1:8

## CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

**Create** ([bara'](#); Lxx- ktizo) **in me a clean** ([tahor](#); Lxx - [katharos](#)) **heart** ([leb](#); Lxx - [kardia](#)), **O God** -- Sin is to the heart like a worm is to an apple and explains David's plea for a clean heart. The worm gets into the apple when the mother worm lays her egg in the apple blossom, which then hatches in the "heart" of the apple. That's what sin is like -- it begins at the core of our being, our heart, and "eats" its deceptive, destructive way into our thoughts, our words and our deeds. Do not be deceived by sin -- even the "little worms" that are not dealt with quickly can cause big destruction! David confessed some "big worms" to God, but in so doing he gives us a beautiful template by which we may confess any and all of our "worms" (big or little, they are all "big" to a holy God) and seek His favor to create in us a clean heart. Hallelujah for the Cross of Christ, which makes confession, contrition, cleansing and creation of a new heart our ever present path to restored fellowship, joy and peace in Christ.

**God** - Hebrew word Elohim, the Name of God which is intimately linked with Creation.

Some commentaries seem to suggest that David was asking God to give him his initial salvation experience but I agree with Derek Kidner who observes that "David's early history and the language of Ps 51:11, 12 show that this is not an unregenerate man's request, but a prayer for holiness (cf. Ps 51:11b)."

**Boice** goes on to explain that "It is an important part of dealing with sin that we confess it and experience the cleansing of God on the basis of Christ's atoning sacrifice. But in addition to this we need to be remade if we are to keep from sin and live to God. A great problem with many Christians is that they seem to be satisfied continuing to live as they always have, even at times much as they lived before they became believers. What we need is the creation of a new heart and its constant renewal." (Genesis: An Expository Commentary)

**J Vernon McGee** - "I need a new heart," David said. "Create in me a new heart," and the word **create** means "out of nothing." In other words, there was nothing in David's heart that God could use. He was not asking for renovation or reformation. He was asking for something new. Sometimes we hear the invitation, "Give God your heart." May I ask you, "What do you think God wants with that old dirty, filthy heart of yours?" He doesn't want it. God is not asking anybody to give Him his heart. He wants to give you a new one. That's what He wants to do. (**Thru the Bible Commentary**)

**Boice** - In other words, as Derek Kidner writes, "With the word **create** he asks for nothing less than a miracle." He desires what only God can provide.

Don't miss the foundational truth that for one to have a **winsome witness** for the Gospel, he must begin with a "**clean heart**" from God, a heart which then is moved to teach transgressors and see sinners converted to God. (Ps 51:13) Saved sinners filled with the Spirit make great evangelists to unsaved sinners.

**Spurgeon** - "**Create.**" What! has sin so destroyed us, that the Creator must be called in again? What ruin then doth evil work among mankind! "Create in me." I, in outward fabric, still exist; but I am empty, desert, void. Come, then, and let Thy power be seen in a new creation within my old fallen self. Thou didst make a man in the world at first; Lord, make a new man in me!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Suppose you turn on a faucet at home, and out comes dirty water. You go to the hardware store, buy a brand-new faucet (a more expensive one), install it and turn it on. Out comes dirty water. Obviously, the problem is not the faucet but the water source. So it is with us. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt. 12:34+). The heart is the center of our lives, and sin defiles it. This is why David said that everything around him was defiled: his eyes (Ps. 51:3), his ears (Ps 51:8), his heart (Ps 51:10) and his spirit. ([Read the full devotional "Good Faucet, Bad Water"](#))

**Martin Luther** explains create in me a clean heart...He is not talking about some momentary operation, but about the continuation of a work that has been begun; as though he were to say: "Thou hast begun Thy work in me so that I trust Thy mercy. Therefore what Thou hast begun, now complete. Confirm, O God, what Thou hast done in me. (Luther's Works, Vol. 12 : Selected Psalms I)

This is a prayer we all would do well to pray daily and even many times during the day for a clean heart is a non-negotiable condition for communion with God. When David prayed for a clean heart, God answered affirmatively. How do we know? Because the lasting legacy of David is not a man with an unclean heart, but "a man after God's own heart." (Acts 13:22).

It is fitting that this verse is the "center" of Psalm 51 for it serves to emphasize the centrality of the state of our heart in all our interactions with God.

**Jesus** explains the infinite value of a **clean heart** declaring...

Blessed are the pure ("clean" = same word as used in Lxx here in Ps 51:10 =katharos) in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt 5:8+)

**Comment:** Surely this is what David desired.

**Solomon** alludes to the value of a **clean heart** charging us...

**Watch over** (command) your **heart** with all diligence, (Why? term of explanation) for from it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23-see in depth discussion of this important verse)

**Blaise Pascal** - We come to know truth not only reason, but still more so through our hearts.

**John Calvin** - Men never entertain a real hatred towards sin unless God illuminates their minds and changes their hearts.

**Play Keith Green's classic vocal version of David's prayer -**

- [Create in me a clean heart](#)
- [Or listen to this country music version - very nice](#)
- [Another vocal](#)
- [Maranatha Singers](#)
- **Bill Gaither Trio's rendition** (old fashioned gospel singing but very nice) of [A Perfect Heart](#)



**Charles Horne** - The purification and renovation of the heart and spirit of man is a work to which that power only is equal, which, in the beginning, created all things, and, in the end, will create all things new.—" A right spirit is renewed within us," when the affections turn from the world to God, and charity takes the place of concupiscence (strong desire, lust, coveting of carnal things). ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**J R Miller** - Next he prays for renewal of heart: **"Create in me a pure heart, O God."** He has discovered the black fountain of sin in his life, pouring up its defiling waters and polluting all his soul. He cannot himself purify this black well, and he brings it to God that He may purify it. The word **"create"** shows that David understood the necessity of a divine work in him, a work nothing less than a new creation. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

**And renew a steadfast spirit within me** - Clearly sin had caused in David a "shaky" spirit. As **Wiersbe** says "Sin also weakens the spirit. All of us want an enthusiastic, steadfast spirit. But David was vacillating. Every time he saw someone, he wondered, What does he know about me? Whenever people were talking together in a corner, David wondered, Are they talking about me? He had a dirty conscience, a vacillating spirit." ([Ref](#))

**Spurgeon - Renew a right spirit within me.** It was there once, Lord, put it there again. The law on my heart has become like an inscription hard to read: new write it, gracious Maker. Remove the evil as I have entreated thee; but, O replace it with good, lest into my swept, empty, and garnished heart, from which the devil has gone out for awhile, seven other spirits more wicked than the first should enter and dwell. The two sentences make a complete prayer. "Create" what is not there at all; "renew" that which is there, but in a sadly feeble state.

**Jamieson - Renew** implies that he had possessed it (**Ed**: And by "default" was indeed a genuine OT believer.); the essential principle of a new nature had not been lost, but its influence interrupted (Lk 22:32); for Ps 51:11 shows that he had not lost God's presence and Spirit (1Sa 16:13), though he had lost the "joy of his salvation" (Ps 51:12), for whose return he prays.

**Perowne** comments that a **steadfast spirit** refers to "one that is firm in faith, not easily swayed hither and thither through its own weakness or by the blasts of temptation, and therefore also firm and constant in obedience." ([The book of Psalms](#))

Regarding a **steadfast spirit**, **Darby** describes it as...a fixed, settled, spirit within me - one that calmly, settledly thinks on God, the heart's only object, and peacefully counts and waits on Him. The soul thus taught cannot do without the presence of God. ([Practical Reflections on the Psalms - Book 2](#))

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**Create** (imperative mood) ([01254](#)) (**bara'**) has the basic meaning "to create", to bring into existence (first use Ge 1:1) and God is the subject of the majority of the OT uses of **bara'** (exceptions - Josh 17:15, 18 = "clear away")! Only God can **"create"** out of nothing (See Genesis passages below - also Dt 4:32, Ps 89:12, 89:47, Isa 40:26, 43:1 Ezek 21:30; 28:13, 15)! In the context of cutting covenant with Israel, God says He will "perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth." (Ex 34:10). **Bara** describes the "entirely new thing" God brought about by opening the earth to swallow Korah and his family into Sheol (Nu 16:30). Ps 102:18 describes a "people yet to be created" who will praise the LORD, which anticipates the divine intervention in the future on behalf of Zion (cf Ps 102:13, 16-17, cf Isa 4:5). Ps 104:30 speaks of God creating life in nature by giving breath.

It should be noted that **bara'** does not always describe creation out of nothing (Josh 15:17, 17:18 = "cut"), but can also stress forming anew, reforming, renewing (Ps 51:10 Isa 43:15, 65:17). In most of the uses the verb **bara'** describes the divine activity of fashioning something new, fresh, and perfect. In Ge 2:3 the use of "created and made" suggests that **bara'** conveys more than just making something.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **bara'** in Ps 51:10 with the Greek verb **ktizo** and in fact uses this same verb to translate **bara'** in all of the Psalms (Ps 89:12, 47, Ps 102:18, Ps 104:30, Ps 148:5e). **Ktizo** which means to bring something into existence or call it into being something that has not existed before. In the NT **ktizo** is used only of God's creativity (man = Mt 19:4, 1Co 11:19, Dt 32:6, creation = Mk 13:19, Col 1:16, Re 4:11, Ex 9:18, Dt 4:32, Creator = Ro 1:25, "re-creation" of men, of his dead spirit = regeneration = Eph 4:24, of the church = Eph 2:15). **Ktizo** is used in Ephesians 2:10-note "For we are His workmanship, **created** (ktizo) in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

All of the uses of **bara'** in Genesis, the book of beginnings are translated in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** with the verb **poieo** ([see Vine's discussion](#)) which basically means to make and is used by Jesus to describe God's creative activity (Mt 19:4 quoting Ge 5:2)

(Gen 1:1) In the beginning God **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) the heavens and the earth.

(Gen 1:21) God **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

(Gen 1:27) God **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

(Gen 2:3) Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) and made (Note: Lxx translated "created and made" with a single verb [poieo](#)).

(Gen 5:1) This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God **created** man, He made him in the likeness of God.

(Gen 5:2) He **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

(Gen 6:7) The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have **created** (Lxx = [poieo](#)) from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

In Ps 51:10, clearly David is asking for God to perform a miracle, a supernatural work in his heart, something only God can accomplish. The whole of David's spiritual being had, as it were, fallen into "moral chaos", and he was in dire need of a pure heart, a child-like assurance that he could approach His Father, a confidence that could only be brought about by a supernatural work of God. **Only God can "fix" a heart that has been broken by the destructive effects of sin!**

Creation is an action that only God can take and so David appeals to God to "Create a pure heart out of nothing." He is not asking God to reform him, for there is nothing in him out of which a genuinely pure heart could be formed! He was born in sin and his sin was ever before him. We are all sinners like David and thus this prayer is a plea for what we all need.

**Bara** - 45v - brings about(1), clear(2), create(6), created(32), creates(1), creating(3), Creator(4), cut them down(1), make(2), produced(1). Ge 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3f; 5:1, 2; 6:7; Ex 34:10; Nu 16:30; Dt 4:32; Josh 17:15, 18; Ps 51:10; 89:12, 47; 102:18; 104:30; 148:5; Eccl 12:1 (Lxx = **ktizo**); Isa 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7, 8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17, 8; Jer 31:22; Ezek 21:19, 30; 23:47; 28:13, 15; Amos 4:13; Mal 2:10

In Isaiah 57 God uses the verb **bara'** declaring...

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend forever, Neither will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath of those whom I have made. Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid My face and was angry, And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners, **Creating** (bara') the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near," Says the LORD, "and I will heal him." But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud. There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." (Isa 57:15-21)

**Comment:** In the context, Jehovah's creation of praise is coming from a revived heart, a contrite heart like David displayed in psalm 51. Such a heart provides the fertile soil in which Elohim does His supernatural creative work of revival and restoration.

Psalm 102 (also one of the traditional penitential psalms [Ps 6,32,38,51,102,130,143] (SEE [What are the penitential psalms?](#)) uses **bara'** to describe one of the purposes of God's creation (to praise the LORD which would explain David's desire for a new heart).

This will be written for the generation to come; That a people yet to be **created** may praise the LORD. (Ps 102:18)

**W E Vine** - **bara** (01254 ,בָּרָא), "to create, make." This verb is of profound theological significance, since it has only God as its subject (**Ed:** Actually not the case - bara' used in Josh 17:15, 18). Only God can "create" in the sense implied by bara. The verb expresses creation out of nothing, an idea seen clearly in passages having to do with creation on a cosmic scale: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Ge. 1:1; cf. Gen. 2:3; Isa. 40:26; 42:5). All other verbs for "creating" allow a much broader range of meaning; they have both divine and human subjects, and are used in contexts where bringing something or someone into existence is not the issue. **Bara** is frequently found in parallel to these other verbs, such as asah, "to make" (Isa. 41:20; 43:7; 45:7, 12; Amos 4:13), yatsar, "to form" (Isa. 43:1, 7; 45:7; Amos 4:13), and kun, "to establish." A verse that illustrates all of these words together is Isa. 45:18: "For thus saith the Lord that created [bara:] the heavens; God himself that formed [yatsar] the earth and made [asah] it; he hath established [kun] it, he created [bara] it not in vain, he formed [yatsar] it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else." The technical meaning of bara (to "create out of nothing") may not hold in these passages; perhaps the verb was

popularized in these instances for the sake of providing a poetic synonym. **Objects of the verb include** the heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 40:26; 42:5; 45:18; 65:17), man (Gen. 1:27; 5:2; 6:7; Dt. 4:32; Ps. 89:47; Isa. 43:7; 45:12); Israel (Isa. 43:1; Mal. 2:10); a new thing (Jer. 31:22); cloud and smoke (Isa. 4:5); north and south (Ps. 89:12); salvation and righteousness (Isa. 45:8); speech (Isa. 57:19); darkness (Isa. 45:7); wind (Amos 4:13); and a new heart (Ps. 51:10). A careful study of the passages where *bara* occurs shows that in the few non-poetic uses (primarily in Genesis), the writer uses scientifically precise language to demonstrate that God brought the object or concept into being from previously nonexistent material. **Especially striking is the use of *bara* in Isaiah 40-65.** Out of 49 occurrences of the verb in the OT, 20 are in these chapters. Because Isaiah writes prophetically to the Jews in Exile, he speaks words of comfort based upon God's past benefits and blessings to His people. Isaiah especially wants to show that, since Yahweh is the Creator, He is able to deliver His people from captivity. The God of Israel has created all things: "I have made [*asah*] the earth, and created [*bara*] man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:12). The gods of Babylon are impotent nonentities (Isa. 44:12-20; 46:1-7), and so Israel can expect God to triumph by effecting a new creation (Isa 43:16-21; 65:17-25). **Though a precisely correct technical term to suggest cosmic, material creation from nothing, *bara* is a rich theological vehicle for communicating the sovereign power of God, Who originates and regulates all things to His glory.** ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Clean** (02889) ([tahor](#)) means pure, clean, purified, genuine, unalloyed (God's Word in [Ps 12:6](#)). "It is applied concretely to substances that are genuine or unadulterated as well as describing an unstained condition of a spiritual or ceremonial nature... **Clean** most frequently describes the purity maintained by avoiding contact with other human beings, abstaining from eating animals, and using things that are declared ceremonially clean. Conversely, cleansing results if ritual procedures symbolizing the removal of contamination are observed." (Vine)

**Tahor** is a Hebrew adjective which occurs ninety-four times and is used in a **material** sense as of "pure" gold, in a **ritual** sense, and in a **ethical** sense. The idea of **tahor** is the identification and distinction of those things (utensils, places, people) that were culturally pure, capable of being used in, or taking part in the religious rituals of Israel. The Lord decreed that Israel must mark off the clean from the unclean (Lev. 10:10; 11:47; Job 14:4). While clean things were considered normal, unclean things were considered polluted, but could be restored to purity (Lev 13:13). However some things, especially certain animals were permanently unclean (Lev. 11:7, 26, 29-31). The deeper sense of *tahor* was in God's desire that His people be morally pure ("Your eyes are too **pure** to approve evil" = Hab 1:13), and so after his sin with Bathsheba, David asked God to create in him a **clean** heart. (Ps 51:10).

**Heart** (03820) ([leb](#)) almost always is used in Scripture in the figurative sense to describe the center of reason, the deepest seat of one's emotions and decisions. In Hebrew, the heart of something referred to the center of that entity. I like to think of the heart as our "control center" think of the vital function of "air traffic controllers") The **heart** is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. The **heart** has been described as "the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity," "the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will," and "the center of a person. The place to which God turns." The **heart** is sometimes used as the symbol for the whole, inner, spiritual aspect of a person.

When God sent the plagues against Egypt, it was Pharaoh's **heart** that was hardened; meaning his "will" (Ex. 9:7). When King David's son, Absalom wanted to turn the allegiance of the people from David to himself, the Bible says that he "stole the **hearts** of the men of Israel"; meaning their allegiance (2Sa 15:6). God sent the worldwide flood on mankind because He "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his **heart** was only evil continually" in this context clearly referring to mankind's moral mindset (Ge 6:5). When David numbered his soldiers in disobedience to God, the Bible tells us that his "**heart** condemned him"; meaning his conscience (2Sa 24:10). King Rehoboam was said to be an evil king, "because he did not prepare his **heart** to seek the LORD" which speaks of his inner priorities and commitments (2Chr 12:14). In sum, the heart is the whole "inner-life", that part of us where our thought-life, our values, our drives, our choices, and our sense of right and wrong all find their seat and origin.

**J Henry Jowett** on **heart** - "Heart" comprehends not only feeling, but intellect and will. It suggests the impulsive; the sphere of the emotions and sympathy, of hatred and of love. It suggests the directive; the realm of plans and of judgment, the sphere and home of thought. It suggests the executive; the power which prosecutes purpose, the forces of persistence and resistance; the offensive and defensive energies of the life. The dominion of the heart is inclusive of the threefold sovereignty of emotion, intellect and will. A clean heart is, therefore, very much more than refined and sensitive feeling. It is also inclusive of illumined and clarified discernment; of healthy and wholesome will. "Create within me a clean heart" is a very wealthy and comprehensive prayer; make my feelings like clean fire, make my thought like a sea of glass. Make my will like a loyal soldier, incapable of mutiny. How is this splendid aim to be gained? By an act of creation. "Create in me a pure heart, O God." There is something in creation that is revolutionary: it is the gift of a seed. John Stuart

Mill said that a revolutionary force entered into his life on the day he came to know the lady who was afterwards to be his wife. The experience is a commonplace in ordinary life. Intimacies mark the beginnings of revolutions. A father says, "It was a bad day when my lad became intimate with such a one," and he mentions the name with bitterness and shame. But why a bad day? A revolutionary force got hold of him, bad principle possessed him. The seed of devilry was implanted, which worked itself out in all manner of unworthiness and sin. The first step in the creation of devilry is to become related to one. On the good side and on the bad the revolutionary in life is occasioned by the establishment of a new relationship. The first requisite in the creation of the Godlike life is relationship with God. Life is revolutionized when man comes into conscious communion with his Maker. Let me illustrate. Here is a reservoir supplying the needs of a great town. The waters become poisoned and defiled. The vast mains become the agents of destruction, the vehicles and purveyors of disease. Epidemics break out. Pestilence abounds. Let me assume that on pure and unpolluted heights there are discovered unmeasured resources of water, clean and undefiled. Let us assume that we could connect the corrupted mains with the clean and wholesome flood. The linking of the two would be the beginning of a revolution. The epidemic would not be obliterated in a day, even with the opening of the crystal flood. But in the revolution would be the potency of health. And here am I, a member of a race, down whose waterways flow currents of diluted and defiled life. That truth is not only proclaimed in the Scripture, it is the doctrine of modern science. One calls it the legacy of Adam, the other the bequest of heredity. "In Adam all die;" the elements of corruption are transmitted; the reservoir from which I drink has been defiled. Now let us assume that I could become related to some reservoir in the heights, some pure river of water of life. How then? What I bespeak as an assumption has been proclaimed as a gospel. I can change the reservoirs; "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The heredity can be changed; "heirs of Adam," we can become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The first element in the new creation is a new relation. We become "new creatures" when we become "one with Christ." The revolution is succeeded by evolution. Becoming the "heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ," I am subjected to a discipline which is intended to develop all the wealth of my inner life. The discipline is intended to discharge the twofold ministry of instruction and chastening. (J. H. Jowett, M. A.)

**Renew** (imperative) ([02318](#)) (**chadash/hadas**) means to make new, to restore, to repair, to renovate or reconstruct ("renew the kingdom" ~ the altar = 1Sa 11:14, restored the altar = 2Chr 15:8, restore the house of Jehovah, the Temple = 2Chr 24:4, 12, surface of the ground = Ps 104:30). The idea is to make like new and implies a restoration to a former state of something which has become faded or disintegrated (in David's case in Ps 51:10, this would refer to the effects of unconfessed sin). To begin again.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **chadash/hadas** here in Ps 51:10 with the Greek verb **egkainizo** (most of the words used to translate the Hebrew uses are derivatives of the great word **kainos**) which means to give newness to something (in Ps 51:10 to David's innermost spirit). **Egkainizo** describes King Asa's restoration of the altar (a place for meeting with God) of the LORD in 2Chr 15:8. **Egkainizo** is also used in 1Ki 8:63 where it conveys the sense of to dedicate (Solomon and all the people dedicated the Temple to the LORD. Cp similar use 2Chr 7:5.) Hebrews 9:18 and Hebrews 10:20 use **egkainizo** with the sense of to inaugurate. Isaiah refers to an eschatological renewal in the last days (Isa 61:4).

We would all do well to pray Jeremiah's prayer for renewal after destruction of God's City and Temple (for us after sin has wreaked havoc on our body, heart, soul and spirit, God's Temple today, our bodies)...

**Restore** (imperative) us to You, O LORD, that we may be restored; **Renew** (chadash; Lxx = anakainizo = renew, restore) our days as of old (Lam 5:21)

**NASB Usage:** renew(5), renewed(1), repair(1), restore(3), restored(1). **Chadash/hadas** - 10v - 1Sa 11:14; 2Chr 15:8; 24:4, 12; Job 10:17; Ps 51:10; Ps 51:12 (Lxx = apodidomi) Ps 103:5 (Lxx = anakainizo); Ps 104:30 (Lxx = anakainizo); Isa 61:4 (Lxx = kainizo); Lam 5:21 (Lxx = anakainizo)

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**F B Meyer** in his devotional **Our Daily Homily** has the following thoughts about renewing a steadfast spirit...

Perhaps a **steadfast spirit** is our chief need: especially so as we gird up our loins for a new stretch of pilgrimage. We do not need nobler ideals. They flash over our souls. We read of Browning kissing, on each anniversary of his wedding, the steps by which his bride went to the marriage altar; and we vow to lift our wedded life higher. We read of Henry Martyn mourning that he had devoted too much time to public work, and too little to private communion with God; and we vow to pray more. We recall the motto written on Green the historian's grave at Mentone, "He died learning;" and we vow that each day shall see some lesson learnt from the great store of Truth. We read those noble words of W. C. Burns, "Oh to have a martyr's heart, if not a martyr's crown;" and we vow to give ourselves absolutely to witness and suffer for Jesus.

**But, alas! our ideals fade within a few hours, and the withered petals are all that remain. We need the steadfast spirit.**

But this God can give us by His Holy Spirit. He can renew our will from day to day, and infuse into us His own unaltering, unalterable purpose. He can make possible, obedience to the apostolic injunction, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1Co 15:58-note) Hear what comfortable words the Apostle Peter says: "The God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself restore, establish, and settle you." (1Co 5:10-note) Then we shall move resolutely and unflinchingly onward; like Columbus, undaunted by discouragement, we shall cross unknown seas, till the scent of the land we seek is wafted across the brief intervening distance.

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**C H Spurgeon** (Morning and Evening) speaks on the sinners continual need for a steadfast spirit noting that...

A backslider, if there be a spark of life left in him will groan after restoration. In this renewal the same exercise of grace is required as at our conversion. We needed repentance then; we certainly need it now. We wanted faith that we might come to Christ at first; only the like grace can bring us to Jesus now. We wanted a word from the Most High, a word from the lip of the loving One, to end our fears then; we shall soon discover, when under a sense of present sin, that we need it now. No man can be renewed without as real and true a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's energy as he felt at first, because the work is as great, and flesh and blood are as much in the way now as ever they were. Let thy personal weakness, O Christian, be an argument to make thee pray earnestly to thy God for help. Remember, David when he felt himself to be powerless, did not fold his arms or close his lips, but he hastened to the mercy-seat with

**Renew a right spirit within me.**

Let not the doctrine that you, unaided, can do nothing, make you sleep; but let it be a goad in your side to drive you with an awful earnestness to Israel's strong Helper. O that you may have grace to plead with God, as though you pleaded for your very life-

**Lord, renew a right spirit within me.**

He who sincerely prays to God to do this, will prove his honesty by using the means through which God works.

Be much in prayer; live much upon the Word of God; kill the lusts which have driven your Lord from you; be careful to watch over the future uprisings of sin.

The Lord has his own appointed ways. Sit by the wayside and you will be ready when He passes by.

Continue in all those blessed ordinances which will foster and nourish your dying graces; and, knowing that all the power must proceed from him, cease not to cry,

**Renew a right spirit within me.**

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**Spiritual Heart Care** - You're up at the crack of dawn, doing your exercises. You're not going to let your heart get weak! You've trimmed the fat from your diet. You get regular cholesterol checks. And you're exercising four times a week to keep your cardiovascular system in peak condition.

But you've let your spiritual heart turn to mush. Preoccupied with the temporary, you've neglected the eternal. You seldom read the Bible anymore. Your prayers are lists of requests to God to make your life more comfortable and pain-free. By the time you reach the church door after the sermon, you can't recall what the pastor said because you were thinking about something else.

If this describes you, it's time to get into a spiritual heart-care program. It begins where David (a man after God's own heart) was in Psalm 139—by acknowledging that God knows all about your heart. It continues in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." And it results in the prayer of Psalm 19:14, "Let... the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord."

Taking care of your body makes sense, but it makes even more sense to gain spiritual fitness by walking with the Lord. That's an exercise program with eternal value! — by David C. Egner

Dear Jesus, take my heart and hand,  
And grant me this, I pray:  
That I through Your sweet love may grow  
More like You day by day.

—Garrison

**To keep spiritually fit,  
keep walking with the Lord.**

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### **Better Than Ever**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Psalm 51:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 51:9-13

The story is told of a group of salmon fishermen who gathered in a Scottish inn after a long day of fishing. As one was describing a catch to his friends, his arm swept across the table and knocked a glass against the wall, shattering it and leaving a stain on the white plaster surface. The man apologized to the innkeeper and offered to pay for the damage, but there was nothing he could do; the wall was ruined. A man seated nearby said, "Don't worry." Rising, he took a painting implement from his pocket and began to sketch around the ugly stain. Slowly there emerged the head of a magnificent stag. The man was Sir E. H. Landseer, Scotland's foremost animal artist.

David, Israel's illustrious king who penned Psalm 51, brought shame on himself and his nation by his sins. He committed adultery with the wife of one of his friends and engineered the death of that friend—both deeds worthy of death. It would seem his life was ruined. But he pled with God: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (v. 12).

Like David we have shameful acts in our past and the memories that accompany them, recollections that taunt us in the middle of the night. There's so much we wish we could undo or redo.

There is a grace that not only forgives sin but also uses it to make us better than before. God wastes nothing. By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, I've failed You again. Please forgive me again. Change me. Turn me around. Teach me to follow Your ways.

God has both an all-seeing eye and all-forgiving heart.

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### **Fresh**

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. — Psalm 51:12

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:8-13

What do you think of when you hear the word fresh? When the weather is nice, my husband and I enjoy going to the farmers market so we can buy produce that was picked that very morning. To me, fresh means just-harvested fruits and vegetables—not stale or spoiled, but crisp and full of exquisite flavor.

I need that kind of freshness in my relationship with God. I can have too many stale attitudes—impatience, criticism, and selfishness—and not enough "longsuffering, kindness, . . . gentleness," which are "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

As David repented of the sin in his life, he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart." Then he petitioned God: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Ps. 51:10-12). Confession and repentance of our sin renews our fellowship with the Lord and allows us to joyously begin anew.

What better time than today to ask God to give you a newness of spirit, a freshness of faith, and a renewed appreciation of Him!

Lord, we want the fruit of our lives to always be "fresh and flourishing" (Ps. 92:14). Help us to experience Your love, compassion, and faithfulness that are "new every morning" (Lam. 3:22-23). Amen. By: Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Master is seeking a harvest  
In lives He's redeemed by His blood;  
He seeks for the fruit of the Spirit,  
And works that will glorify God.  
—Lehman

To bear good fruit, clear out the weeds of sin.

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## Come Home

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. — Psalm 51:12

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:1-13

As 19-year-old Amelia waited in her doctor's office, she recognized the familiar hymn "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling" playing over the speaker. It made her smile when she remembered the words. Perhaps a song with the lyrics "shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming" was not the most appropriate background music for a doctor's office!

Some find this old hymn too sentimental for their taste. But the message of the chorus can be encouraging for the wayward sinner:

Come home, come home,  
Ye who are weary, come home;  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
Calling, "O sinner, come home!"

When a believer replaces God's will with his own, he will find himself in a backslidden condition, out of fellowship with God, in an unenviable state. Although we sometimes yield to our self-centered nature, God is always ready to welcome us back. Because of His "lovingkindness" and "tender mercies," it gives Him joy when we forsake our rebellious ways, return to Him, and ask for forgiveness (Ps. 51:1-2; Luke 15).

Has your heart and mind slipped away from your Savior? Jesus is calling and waiting for you to come back home. By: Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O for the wonderful love He has promised,  
Promised for you and for me;  
Though we have sinned He has mercy and pardon,  
Pardon for you and for me.  
—Thompson

A child of God is always welcomed home.

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## A Lost Experience

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. — Psalm 51:12

Today's Scripture: Psalm 51:1-13

A pastor in Los Angeles visited a man and asked if he was a Christian. "Oh, yes, I was a member of a church in Ohio," he said, "and when I asked for my letter of church membership before coming west, I sat down and wrote out my Christian experience. I took them both and put them in a little box. I would like to show them to you."

But when he got the box, it was evident that a mouse had gnawed its way into the container and destroyed the papers. He said to the pastor, "I have lost my Christian experience and my church letter."

If all that the man lost was those two documents, it was no great loss. Many put great stock in a baptismal certificate or a church letter but have experienced no genuine work of grace in their heart. Only faith in the Savior will provide salvation.

Genuine Christians can also take a warning from this story. Their once vital "experience" may have been "put in a box" and allowed to deteriorate. They have failed to keep it fresh and vibrant by daily fellowship with the Lord through prayer and Bible study.

If this describes you, cry with David, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). By: Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
Show the way that Jesus has trod;  
Then I will tell of Your saving grace,  
Until the day when I see Your face.  
—Hess

Faith in a creed can go stale—faith in Christ can be fresh every day.

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## The Source

Create in me a pure heart, O God. Psalm 51:10

Today's Scripture & Insight: Mark 7:14–23

It was 1854, and something was killing thousands of people in London. It must be the bad air, people thought. And indeed, as unseasonable heat baked the sewage-fouled River Thames, the smell grew so bad it became known as "The Great Stink."

But the worst problem wasn't the air. Research by Dr. John Snow would show that contaminated water was the cause of the cholera epidemic.

We humans have long been aware of another crisis—one that stinks to high heaven. We live in a broken world—and we're prone to misidentify the source of this problem, treating symptoms instead. Wise social programs and policies do some good, but they're powerless to stop the root cause of society's ills—our sinful hearts!

When Jesus said, "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them," He wasn't referring to physical diseases (Mark 7:15). Rather, He was diagnosing the spiritual condition of every one of us. "It is what comes out of a person that defiles them," He said (v. 15), listing a litany of evils lurking inside us (vv. 21–22).

"Surely I was sinful at birth," David wrote (Psalm 51:5). His lament is one we can all voice. We're broken from the beginning. That's why David prayed, "Create in me a pure heart, O God" (v. 10). Every day, we need that new heart, created by Jesus through His Spirit.

Instead of treating the symptoms, we must let Jesus purify the source. By: Tim Gustafson

In what ways might you be treating symptoms instead of letting Jesus clean up the source? How can you share the good news of what Jesus did for you?

Heavenly Father, guard my heart and help me be attentive to Your Spirit within me.

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**Thomas Reade** (1841) offers a great prayer in his notes on Psalm 51:10...

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity; for it is great." Psalm. 25:11

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10

David's plea must be mine; "O Lord pardon my iniquity for it is great." Also the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And Peter's cry, "Lord, save me! or I perish."

With shame and confusion of face I look up unto You, Oh! bleeding Lamb, for having slighted Your goodness, and loving-kindness towards me. Take away this earthliness from my mind; this coldness from my heart; this insensibility to the things of God. Preserve me from a secret alienation of heart; from a growing lukewarmness. Do not allow the enemy to triumph over me. Allow me not to fall from You.

Adorable Jesus! I acknowledge my vileness, my worthlessness, my ingratitude. But, oh! let me still hope in Your mercy; still plead the merit of Your blood; still expect Your renewing strength; still long, and look, for the visits of Your grace. I am a sinner, and You died to save sinners.

You are the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Strength. Endue me with power from on high to overcome all my indwelling corruptions, which, like a thick cloud, intervene between my soul and You, the Sun of Righteousness, and thus prevent the rays of Your consolation from gladdening my heart, and making me to abound in the fruits of righteousness. To whom can I look- to whom can I go, but unto You, O Friend of sinners. Lord, I come invited by Your word. I come at Your sweet call, for pardon, peace, and holiness. You delight to save. O make me willing to be saved in Your way, and on Your terms. May I have grace to receive salvation as the gift of grace, and to plead for mercy as a lost sinner, through Your all-prevailing Name and merits.

You, O Jesus, are exalted "to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" and shall I not praise You for such infinite love, such abounding grace to the chief of sinners? O give me a heart to praise You. Stir up my languid desires. Inflammé my cold affections. Set my whole soul on fire with holy love. Lord! I am sorely grieved, that I love You so little; that my affections move so slowly towards You. But, You give more grace. O bestow it upon me in richer abundance, that so I may live more to Your glory, and to the comfort of my own soul, until joy shall be complete, and love perfected, in Your presence and glory.



"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." What reason I have continually to complain of a barren heart. Did I say barren? Is it not full of evil? And, yet, it is a barren heart still, destitute of that love and humility, and those heavenly affections, which dwell in every child of God. Oh! how I long to be a real, sincere disciple of Jesus Christ. It is easy to make a profession of religion; that may be done by fallen nature; but to possess the Spirit of Christ, can only be enjoyed by those whom Sovereign Grace endues with so great a benefit.

Oh! that I knew how to estimate the blessings of salvation. Lord, enlighten my mind to see more clearly the riches of Your grace, the wonders of Your love, and the greatness of Your mercy, as manifested to perishing sinners, in Christ Jesus. O allow me to taste Your goodness, and relish those sublime truths, which are revealed in Your holy word. How painful, that I should be so little affected by the agony and bloody sweat, the Cross and passion, of my suffering Redeemer. Why is not my soul all on fire, when I think of Your love? Why is it not melted into tears, when I think of my dying Savior? Am I harder than the rock in Horeb? Colder than the northern ice? Lord! Smite my rocky heart with the rod of your loving-kindness; dissolve my frozen affections, by the melting beams of Your grace.

Ah! "When shall I be made clean? When shall it once be." Lord grant that it may be now. This night I may be in eternity. O! blessed Jesus, hasten Your glorious work of sanctification in my soul. Alas! what cause have I to complain of that dead sea which lies within. Oh! that the living waters from the sanctuary may flow into my corrupted heart; that pure streams may constantly issue from it into my life and conversation.

How distressing are evil thoughts. How dreadful is the perception of such subtle wickedness, insinuating itself into the mind, and fixing its abode for days, in opposition to strivings, prayers, and tears! Lord lift up Your arm. "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." Bid the powers of darkness to depart from me; or, if these thoughts arise from the corruption of my fallen nature, O! Remove this dreadful cause, by plunging me into the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; by sitting as a refiner's fire; and by consuming, through Your grace, the dross of sin. Then shall I be holy and happy, peaceful and full of joy. ([Reference](#))

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**Wilson** - O, the wonder of it! When my heart has been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the bloodstains on my hands disappear as though they had never been. When my heart is pure my hands are clean. I can open my hands in the very presence of the Lord. And when the call rings out, Who may stand in His holy place?, with confidence, I can reply, "I may. By the blood of Jesus Christ, I may." For my heart is pure and my hands are clean. (**Journey into holiness**)

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**J Evans** writes on a clean heart...

### **I. INQUIRE INTO THE MEANING OF A CLEAN HEART, or the proper ingredients and expressions of such a temper of soul.**

1. A fixed habitual abhorrence of all forbidden indulgences of the flesh. This is that which principally constitutes a clean heart; and from this all the other fruits and expressions of such a temper will proceed.
2. All past impurities, either of heart or life, will be reflected on with shame and sorrow (Jeremiah 31:19; Ezekiel 16:63; 20:42, 43).
3. A clean heart imports that the heart is actually freed in a good measure from impure thoughts and irregular desires; or at least that they are not entertained with pleasure and delight. He cannot be at rest till they are dispossessed and gone.
4. A clean heart discovers itself by a cautious fear of the least degrees of impurity. He dares not allow himself to go to the utmost bounds of things lawful, because he reckons himself to be then upon a precipice.
5. A clean heart necessarily implies a careful and habitual guard against everything which tends to pollute the mind (Proverbs 4:23-note). All loose and vicious company will be avoided as much as may be by those who have a clean heart. Intemperance will be carefully avoided by those who have an earnest concern to maintain their purity.

### **II. REPRESENT THE OBLIGATIONS THAT LIE UPON US TO SEEK AFTER SUCH A PURITY OF HEART.**

1. A ruling inclination to sensuality is directly contrary to the purity and holiness of the Divine nature.
2. Sensuality has a special tendency to extinguish the light of reason, and to unfit for anything spiritual and sacred.
3. Sensuality is most contrary to the design and engagements of Christianity. Our Lord inculcated the strictest purity upon all His disciples; not only an abstinence from gross outward acts, but from polluting thoughts and desires (Mt 5:27, 28-note, Mt 5:29, 30-note).

4. The blessed hope with which Christianity inspires us, lays us under a forcible engagement to present purity.

(1) Those of the contrary temper are absolutely excluded, by the express declarations of the Gospel, from the kingdom of God (1Cor 6:9, 10).

(2) On the contrary, the promise of the future blessedness is most plainly made to the pure in heart (Matthew 5:8-note).

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## HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS

### 1) The change to be effected.

A clean heart.

A right spirit.

### 2) The power by which it is accomplished.

A creative power, such as created the world at first.

A renewing power, such as continually renews the face of the earth.

### 3) The acquirement of these blessings. The prayer, "Create," etc.

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**John MacDuff** prays...

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."—Psalm 51:10

Almighty God, who has mercifully preserved me during the unconscious hours of slumber, I desire to dedicate my waking moments and thoughts to You. Pre-occupy my mind with hallowed and heavenly things. May I be enabled throughout this day, by the help of Your Holy Spirit, to exclude all that is vain and frivolous and sinful, and to have my affections centered on You, as my best portion and chief joy. As Your Spirit of old brooded over the face of the waters, may that same blessed Spirit descend in all the plenitude of His heavenly graces, that the gloom of a deeper moral chaos may be dispersed, and that mine may be the beauty and happiness and gladness of a soul that has been transformed "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God."

Forbid, blessed Lord! that I should be resting in anything short of this new creation. May my old nature be crucified; and, as one alive from the dead, may I "walk with Jesus in newness of life." May the new life infused by Your Spirit urge me to higher attainments and more heavenly aspirations. May I be enabled to see the world in its true light—its pleasures fading, its hopes delusive, its friendships perishable. May I be more solemnly and habitually impressed by the surpassing magnitude of "the things not seen." May I give evidence of the reality of a renewal of heart by a more entire and consistent dedication of the life. May my soul become a temple of the Holy Spirit; may "Holiness to the Lord" be its superscription. May I be led to feel that there can be no true joy but what emanates from Yourself, the fountain and fullness of all joy—the God in whom "all my well springs" are.

Whatever may be the discipline You are employing for this inward heart-transformation, let me be willing to submit to it. Let me lie passive in the arms of Your mercy, saying, "Undertake for me." May it be mine to bear all, and endure all, and rejoice in all—adoring a Father's hand, and trusting a Father's faithfulness—feeling secure in a Father's tried love.

Blessed Jesus! anew would I wash in the opened Fountain. The new heart, like every holy blessing I can ask, is the purchase of that blood which You so freely shed. May it be sprinkled on my guilty conscience. May I ever know what it is to be living on a living Savior, bringing all-emptiness to all-fullness—the unworthiness of infinite demerit to the worthiness of all-sufficient, all-abounding, grace and mercy.

Shine upon my ways. May I this day get nearer heaven. May I feel at its close that I have done something for God—something to promote the great end for which existence was given me—the glory of Your holy name. Bless all my beloved friends. Unite us together in bonds of holy fellowship here; and at last, in Your presence, may we be permitted to drink together of the streams of everlasting love. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"Cause me to hear Your loving-kindness in the morning, for in You do I trust." ([FOR RENEWAL OF HEART](#))

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## QUESTION - [Why did David ask God to “create in me a clean heart” in Psalm 51:10?](#)

**ANSWER** - When David prays, “Create in me a clean heart,” he is asking God for forgiveness. The subtitle to Psalm 51 clarifies the situation: “A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with [Bathsheba](#).”

Second Samuel 11 tells the sordid tale. King David saw Bathsheba, a married woman, and lusted after her. He summoned her to fulfill his desires. Some time later, she notified him that she was pregnant with his child. David first tried a cover up, and, when that did not work, he arranged for the murder of Bathsheba’s husband. David then married her.

Obviously, David did not have a clean heart after this. He had committed [adultery](#) and possibly rape, as the language used in this case is also used of rape; his summoning of and sleeping with Bathsheba was certainly an abuse of royal authority. He then engaged in deception and finally in murder, corrupting others in the process. When it was all done, he thought he had succeeded in covering it up and destroying all the evidence. The last sentence of 2 Samuel 11 tells us, “But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.”

In 2 Samuel 12, the prophet Nathan confronts David. He does so using a parable that David could relate to. He told of a rich man who took advantage of a poor man by stealing his only lamb, a pet, which he killed to feed to his guests. David was overcome with anger and exclaimed, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity” (2 Samuel 12:5–6).

Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7). Although David had tried to hide his sin, it was eating away at him inside, as he records in Psalm 32:3–4: “When I kept silent [about my sin], my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” David admitted to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13). He knew he needed a clean heart.

When David was through trying to hide his sin, he confessed it freely. Psalm 51 is that confession and plea for forgiveness. His request “create in me a clean heart” is simply another way of asking for forgiveness and spiritual cleansing. Psalm 51:1–10 is filled with poetic descriptions of forgiveness and cleansing, identified in italics below:

*“Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.*

“For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
and justified when you judge.  
Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.  
Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

*“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.*

*“Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”*

Even though David suffered consequences for his sin, which are outlined in 2 Samuel 12, he was forgiven and restored to spiritual fellowship with God. Psalm 32 tells of the great relief that David felt when he confessed, and in this psalm he encourages others to

confess their sins as well:

“Blessed is the one  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.  
Blessed is the one  
whose sin the LORD does not count against them  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

“When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, ‘I will confess  
my transgressions to the LORD.’  
And you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.

“Therefore let all the faithful pray to you  
while you may be found;  
surely the rising of the mighty waters  
will not reach them.  
You are my hiding place;  
you will protect me from trouble  
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.  
Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
or they will not come to you.  
Many are the woes of the wicked,  
but the LORD’s unfailing love  
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

“Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;  
sing, all you who are upright in heart!”

Paul uses Psalm 32 as an example of salvation apart from works (Romans 4:6–8). David was forgiven not because of any works he did to earn forgiveness, but simply because he asked in faith. Because of the sacrifice of Christ, any sinner can ask God for [forgiveness](#), that is, for a clean heart, and he will receive it. The apostle John also tells us, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1: 8–9). In spite of all that David did, and all that we do, God is willing to forgive because Jesus paid the penalty that we deserve. No matter how dirty we are, God can create in us a clean heart. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Psalm 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.**

BGT Psalm 50:13 μ πορρ ψ ς με π το προσ που σου κα τ πνε μα τ γι ν σου μ νταν λ ς π μο

LXE Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and remove not thy holy Spirit from me.  
 KJV Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.  
 NET Psalm 51:11 Do not reject me! Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me!  
 CSB Psalm 51:11 Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
 ESV Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
 NIV Psalm 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
 NLT Psalm 51:11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.  
 NRS Psalm 51:11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.  
 NJB Psalm 51:11 do not thrust me away from your presence, do not take away from me your spirit of holiness.  
 NAB Psalm 51:13 Do not drive me from your presence, nor take from me your holy spirit.  
 YLT Psalm 51:11 Cast me not forth from Thy presence, And Thy Holy Spirit take not from me.  
 GWN Psalm 51:11 Do not force me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.  
 BBE Psalm 51:11 Do not put me away from before you, or take your holy spirit from me.  
 RSV Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.  
 NKJ Psalm 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
 ASV Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; And take not thy holy Spirit from me.  
 DBY Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not the spirit of thy holiness from me.  
 BHT Psalm 51:13 'al-Tašlîkê<sup>ñ</sup>nî millûpânÊ<sup>q</sup>kâ wûrû<sup>a</sup>H qodšûkâ 'al-TiqqaH mimme<sup>ñ</sup>nî  
 NIRV Psalm 51:11 Don't send me away from you. Don't take your Holy Spirit away from me.  
 RWB Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.  
 WEB Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

- **Cast:** Ps 43:2 71:9,18 Ge 4:14 2Ki 13:23 17:18-23 23:27 2Th 1:9
- **take:** Ge 6:3 Jud 13:25 15:14 16:20 1Sa 10:10 16:14 2Sa 7:15 Isa 63:10,11
- **holy:** Lu 11:13 Joh 14:26 Ro 1:4 8:9 Eph 4:30

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 16:13+ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward**. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

### PLEA FOR THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF GOD

**Do not cast me away from Your presence** - David although heavily burdened with sin, yet maintains a consciousness of still having the divine presence and a dread of losing it which prompts his prayer. Clearly this implies David had previously experienced God's presence. The Septuagint uses *aporripto* meaning to cause a sudden or forcible separation (used in Acts 27:43+). Many commentators feel that David was recalling the fate of his predecessor's (Saul's) disobedience and failure to repent of his sin...

Now **the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul**, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. (1Sa 16:14, 15+)

**THOUGHT:** Beware of the unconfessed sin potentially exposing you to the influences of an evil spirit! This may not be a principle, but it certainly is a possibility. There are several NT occasions where God turned people over to demons or Satan for judgment (see Acts 5:1, 2 3+; 1Co 5:1-7+; 1Ti 1:18, 19, 20+).

**Cast** and **take** are both in the imperfect mood expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete. The **imperfect** adds colour and movement by suggesting the "process" preliminary to its completion.

**Presence** (06440) ([panim/paniym/paneh](#)) refers first to the face and is so translated in Ps 34:16<sup>+</sup>. The Septuagint noun is **prosopon** (**pros** = toward + **ops** = eye or face) which is literally the part toward the eye and thus toward the face or countenance of God in the present context. Only those who have confessed their sin would even desire to **seek the face** of the Holy One of Israel (see Ps 24:6, 27:8, 9, Ps 31:16, Ps 80:3, Ps 80:7, Ps 80:19)

**Spurgeon - Cast me not away from Thy presence.** Throw me not away as worthless; banish me not, like Cain, from Thy face and favor. Permit me to sit among those who share Thy love, though I only be suffered to keep the door. I deserve to be forever denied admission to Thy courts; but, O good Lord, permit me still the privilege which is dear as life itself to me.

**W Wilson** - Like the leper who is banished from society till cleansed, or as Saul was rejected from being king, because he obeyed not the word of the Lord. 1 Samuel 15:23+. David could not but feel that his transgression would have deserved a similar rejection.

**Your presence** - This is David's great desire and reminds one of his great declaration in Psalm 16:1<sup>+</sup>

Thou wilt make known to me the path of life. **In Thy presence** (paniym) is fulness of joy. In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

In **Psalm 69** David requests of God...**Do not hide Thy face** (paniym) from Thy servant, for I am in distress; answer me quickly. (Ps 69:17<sup>+</sup>)

**Spurgeon:** A good servant desires the light of his master's countenance; that servant, could not bear to lose the presence of his God. The more he loved his Father, the more severely he felt the hiding of his face.

The psalmist in **Psalm 102** beseeches Jehovah...**Do not hide Thy face** (paniym) from me in the day of my distress; Incline Thine ear to me; In the day when I call answer me quickly. (Ps 102:2<sup>+</sup>)

**Spurgeon:** Do not seem as if thou didst not see me, or wouldst not own me. Smile now at any rate. Reserve Thy frowns for other times when I can bear them better, if, indeed, I can ever bear them; but now in my heavy distress, favor me with looks of compassion.

**Psalm 143**...Answer me quickly, O LORD, my spirit fails. **Do not hide Thy face** from me, lest I become like those who go down to the pit. (Ps 143:7<sup>+</sup>)

**Spurgeon:** Communion with God is so dear to a true heart that the withdrawal of it makes the man feel as though he were ready to die and perish utterly. God's withdrawals reduce the heart to despair, and take away all strength from the mind. Moreover, His absence enables adversaries to work their will without restraint; and thus, in a second way, the persecuted one is like to perish. If we have God's countenance we live, but if He turns his back upon us we die. When the Lord looks with favor upon our efforts we prosper, but if He refuses to countenance them we labour in vain.

**David pleads with God** that he not lose the closeness of God's face and His Holy Spirit. David understood that in the Christian life, everything depends on our fellowship with the Lord and so was anguished about losing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Beloved, may we all come to understand that while we are all sons of God by faith in Christ, we are not all enjoying intimate fellowship with our Father. Fellowship depends on our faithfulness (obedience) to God. And so if we like David confess our uncleanness and seek His cleanness and forgiveness, we retain this wonderful sense of intimacy with God. Don't let unconfessed sin rob you of enjoying the intimate presence of the Lover of your soul. The believer's fellowship with God is conditional. Simply stated - If we have unconfessed sin, we cannot enjoy fellowship with God.

**W. Jackson** says **do not cast me away from...**

From Thy protecting presence into danger.

From Thy loving presence into wrath.

From Thy joyous presence into distress.

From Thy affluent presence into destitution.

From Thy gracious presence into despair. Sin hurries us away from God; grace hastens us into his embrace: the former severs, and the latter unites, God and the soul.

**And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me**- In 1 Samuel 16:13+ **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.** David's 9-12 month cover-up had grieved the Spirit (2Sa 11:6-27+), but from David's plea the Spirit had not completely departed from him as He did from Saul when he sinned and refused to repent. **Take** (03947) (**laqah**) is a frequent verb in Hebrew (>900x) in the present context means to remove from David's presence.

**Spurgeon - Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.** Withdraw not His comforts, counsels, assistances, quickenings, else I am indeed as a dead man. Do not leave me as Thou didst Saul, when neither by Urim, nor by prophet, nor by dream, thou wouldst answer him. Thy Spirit is my wisdom, leave me not to my folly; He is my strength, O desert me not to my own weakness. Drive me not away from Thee, neither do Thou go away from me. Keep up the union between us, which is my only hope of salvation. It will be a great wonder if so pure a Spirit deigns to stay in so base a heart as mine; but then, Lord, it is all wonder together, therefore do this, for Thy mercy's sake, I earnestly entreat Thee.

**Boice** writes... Today most commentators recognize that David is not talking about eternal security or the fear of losing his salvation at all. He is only acknowledging that he is unable to live a holy life without God. Therefore, he needs the help and power of the Holy Spirit every single moment if he is to be able to overcome temptation and follow after godliness. J. J. Stewart Perowne writes along these lines, explaining, "It is the cry of one who knows, as he never knew before, the weakness of his own nature, and the strength of temptation, and the need of divine help." Alexander Maclaren has the same idea in mind when he says, "The psalmist is recoiling from what he knows only too well to be the consequence of an unclean heart—separation from God."

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**Cast... away** (07993) (shalak/salak) means to throw, fling, hurl, cast, as in Ge 21:15 and Nu 35:20. Throw often implying intensity or violence (Ge 37:20). Reject, to thrust behind the back, no longer have a relationship as before (1Ki 14:9; Ne 9:26; Eze 23:35) **Shalak/salak** can mean to cast away in the sense of getting rid of something that hinders (sin = Ezek. 18:31; fetters = Ps. 2:3). Shalak/salak describes God's rejection (2Ki 17:20; 24:20). In a figurative use, the psalmist encourages us to "Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken." (Ps 55:22-note) Another figurative use is cast a wrong out of sight and thus forgive. (Isa 38:17). In Ex 32:19, Dt 9:17 Moses casts the tablets of the Law down, depicting Israel's breaking of the covenant. To cast someone or something to the ground may be a gesture of victory over them (Da 8:7). Cast off in the sense of abandon (idols = Ezek 3:1, 20:7-8)

The Lxx translates **shalak** in Ps 51:11 with the verb **aporripto** which means to throw down or away, to cast oneself overboard (Acts 27:43), to cause a sudden or forcible separation (1Pe 5:7, Ps 50:13).

**Herman** - The verb is used in a wide variety of situations ranging from the physical act of throwing an object to the metaphorical use of abandoning or rejecting a person or thing... Another important use of **šālak** is "throw away," "cast off or out." In Neh 13:8, Nehemiah throws Tobiah's things out of the temple. Similarly in Isa 2:20, when God begins to speak in judgment, the idolaters will throw away their idols and run to the caves and rocks. So in Ps 71:9 the Psalmist prays that God will not cast him away (i.e. abandon him) in his old age (cf. also Ps 102:10)].

**Vine** - shalak (7993, שָׁלַךְ), "to throw, fling, cast, overthrow." Its first use in the OT is in Ge 21:15, which says that Hagar "cast the child [Ishmael] under one of the shrubs." The word is used to describe the "throwing" or "casting" of anything tangible: Moses "threw" a tree into water to sweeten it (Ex 15:25); Aaron claimed he "threw" gold into the fire and a golden calf walked out (Ex. 32:24). Trees "shed" or "cast off" wilted blossoms (Job 15:33). **Shalak** indicates "rejection" in Lam 2:1: "How hath the Lord ...cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel.

**Cathar** - 121 verses - **NAS**: brings him down(1), **cast**(41), cast it away(1), cast me away(2), cast me off(1), cast them away(1), cast away(5), cast down(2), cast off(1), casts(1), dropped(1), fling(2), hurl(1), hurled(2), left(1), risked\*(1), snatched(1), stretching(1), **threw**(29), threw her down(1), threw his down(1), threw them down(1), threw down(1), throw(13), throw it down(1), throw them away(1), throw away(1), thrown(8), thrown away(1), thrown down(1). Ge 21:15; 37:20, 22, 24; Ex 1:22; 4:3; 7:9f, 12; 15:25; 22:31; 32:19, 24; Lev 1:16; 14:40; Nu 19:6; 35:20, 22; Dt 9:17, 21; 29:28; Josh 8:29; 10:11, 27; 18:8, 10; Jdg 8:25; 9:17, 53; 15:17; 2Sa 11:21; 18:17; 20:12, 21f; 1Kgs 13:24f, 28; 14:9; 19:19; 2Kgs 2:16, 21; 3:25; 4:41; 6:6; 7:15; 9:25f; 10:25; 13:21, 23; 17:20; 23:6, 12; 24:20; 2Chr 7:20; 24:10; 25:12; 30:14; 33:15; Neh 9:11, 26; 13:8; Job 15:33; 18:7; 27:22; 29:17; Ps 2:3; 22:10; 50:17; 51:11; 55:22; 60:8; 71:9; 102:10; 108:9; 147:17; Eccl 3:5f; Isa 2:20; 14:19; 19:8; 34:3; 38:17; Jer 7:15, 29; 9:19; 14:16; 22:19, 28; 26:23; 36:23, 30; 38:6, 9; 41:9; 51:63; 52:3; Lam 2:1; Ezek 5:4; 7:19; 16:5; 18:31; 19:12; 20:7f; 23:35; 28:17; 43:24; Da 8:7, 11f; Joel 1:7; Amos 4:3; 8:3; Jonah 2:3; Mic 2:5; 7:19; Nah 3:6; Zech 5:8; 11:13

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**QUESTION - [Can you lose the Holy Spirit?](#) (See accompanying video)**

**ANSWER** - The [Holy Spirit](#) is the third Person in the triune [Godhead](#). The Holy Spirit indwells believers at the moment of salvation. We know from 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19–20 that the bodies of Christians are the Spirit's temple. The teaching of the New Testament is that the Holy Spirit's indwelling is permanent. We cannot lose the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament relates occasions in which the Spirit left someone, such as King Saul (1 Samuel 16:14) or Samson (Judges 16:20). However, in those days the Holy Spirit worked differently than He does since the time Jesus rose from the dead. In the Old Testament, the Spirit is never said to

“indwell” anyone; rather, He “came upon” people for a time to accomplish specific purposes (Judges 3:10; 1 Chronicles 12:18). The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to proclaim truth to the people (Ezekiel 11:1–2). He instructed the leaders of Israel (1 Samuel 16:13). He inspired the writing of Scripture (2 Peter 1:21). But He did not indwell those people as He now does with believers in Christ.

Before Christ’s finished work and ascension, the Holy Spirit came and went, but He no longer works that way. He does not come and go in the lives of believers today. Just before His arrest, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit, who “lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). The Amplified Bible emphasizes the permanency of the Spirit’s presence: “He lives with you [constantly] and will be in you.”

Acts 2 describes the transition from the Old Testament economy to the New as it pertains to the Holy Spirit. The disciples were gathered for prayer, waiting for the promise of the Father, in obedience to Jesus (John 14:26; Acts 1:4, 8). As they prayed, the Holy Spirit fell upon them all and filled them (verse 3–4). Jesus’ promise was fulfilled, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit came upon all who had trusted in Christ. That outpouring resulted in courage in the face of opposition, love for all humanity, and supernatural gifts and abilities to further the gospel (1 Corinthians 12:4; Hebrews 2:4).

Salvation is impossible without the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Jesus explained this to Nicodemus in John 3:1–21. Nicodemus, a leader of the Jewish religion, wanted to know what laws he could keep or additional actions he could perform that would guarantee eternal life. Jesus responded that there was nothing Nicodemus could do and that salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit’s work in a repentant heart, no one can be born again, regardless of how many “[sinner’s prayers](#)” he prays or Christian actions he performs. It is the Holy Spirit who regenerates and renews a heart (Titus 3:5).

An issue related to losing the Holy Spirit is [eternal security](#). There is debate among Christians about whether or not someone can lose his or her salvation. To lose salvation would be to lose the Holy Spirit who provides it. In fact, Scripture says that the Holy Spirit “seals” our salvation until we experience its completion in the presence of God (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). For the Holy Spirit to vacate a heart that He had promised to seal would make Him unfaithful. One of the Holy Spirit’s tasks, after moving into a believing heart, is transforming that person into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:29), and we have the promise that “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion” (Philippians 1:6). We do not believe the Spirit will undo His work of regeneration, give up on His transformative work, or redefine *eternal life* to mean “temporary life.”

Since we did not “find” the Holy Spirit, it is doubtful that we can “lose” Him. Some take issue with the word *lose* and say that, while a Christian cannot *lose* the Holy Spirit, he or she can *forfeit* the gifts and salvation He brings by a [willful renouncement](#) of Him. However, Ephesians 1:13 says, “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” Can a believer truly break the seal placed on him by God? The Holy Spirit is the mark of a true believer; therefore, to lose Him would be to lose any hope of salvation in the future.

Ephesians 4:30 warns us not to “grieve the Holy Spirit.” And 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says that we can “quench the Spirit.” These passages do not imply that the Holy Spirit has left us, only that He is sorrowful because of our sinful actions. The grieving and quenching of the Spirit hinders our fellowship with Him but does not nullify our salvation, in much the same way that a rebellious child may lose the fellowship of a parent but is not kicked out of the family.

What causes confusion on this issue is that we cannot know whether someone else has truly been born of the Spirit or whether he is the “shallow soil” as Jesus described in Luke 8:1–15. Some people seem excited to follow Jesus and may exhibit what appear to be supernatural gifts, but they were never truly born again. Jesus addresses those people with a stern warning in Matthew 7:21–23. Many people profess to have the Holy Spirit but eventually prove that they were imposters when their lives turn away from following Him (see Romans 8:14). Such people did not lose the Holy Spirit; He was never theirs at all (1 John 2:19). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.**

BGT Psalm 50:14 π ῶς μοι τ ν γαλλ ασι ν το σωτηρ ου σου κα πνε ματι γεμονικ στ ρισ ν με

LXE Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation: establish me with thy directing Spirit.

KJV Psalm 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

NET Psalm 51:12 Let me again experience the joy of your deliverance! Sustain me by giving me the desire to obey!

CSB Psalm 51:12 Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit.



ESV Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

NIV Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

NLT Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

NRS Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

NJB Psalm 51:12 Give me back the joy of your salvation, sustain in me a generous spirit.

NAB Psalm 51:14 Restore my joy in your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit.

YLT Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And a willing spirit doth sustain me.

GWN Psalm 51:12 Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and provide me with a spirit of willing obedience.

BBE Psalm 51:12 Give me back the joy of your salvation; let a free spirit be my support.

RSV Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

NKJ Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

ASV Psalm 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; And uphold me with a willing spirit.

DBY Psalm 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and let a willing spirit sustain me.

BHT Psalm 51:14 häšî<sup>o</sup>bâ lî SüSôn yiš`e<sup>o</sup>kâ wûrû<sup>a</sup>H nûdîbâ tismükê<sup>o</sup>nî

NIRV Psalm 51:12 Give me back the joy that comes from being saved by you. Give me a spirit that obeys you. That will keep me going.

RWB Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

WEB Psalm 51:12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me {with thy} free spirit.

- **Restore:** Ps 85:6-8 Job 29:2,3 Isa 57:17,18 Jer 31:9-14
- **joy:** Ps 13:5 21:1 35:9 Isa 49:13 61:10 Lu 1:47 Ro 5:2-11
- **uphold:** Ps 17:5 19:13 119:116,117,133 Isa 41:10 Jer 10:23 Ro 14:4 1Pe 1:5 Jude 1:24
- **free:** Ro 8:15 2Co 3:17 Ga 4:6,7

## RESTORE MY JOY GIVE ME A WILLING SPIRIT

**Restore** ([chadash](#); Lxx - [apodidomi](#)) **to me the joy** ([sason](#); Lxx - ) **of Your salvation** ([yesha'](#), [yêsha'](#); Lxx - *soterios*) - Genuine salvation is characterized by Spirit enabled supernatural **joy!** Personal plea for restoration, implying that he desires to return to a place with God that he has experienced in the past. **Restore** is in the imperative mood in the Hebrew, which is amazing to me that finite beings could approach God using the imperative mood. On the other hand it surely reflects how incredible is the privilege to us as His children who "have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand" (Ro 5:2+), an entree which makes available to every sinning saint the boldness and "confidence to (approach) the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16+). Oh, how we should be overwhelmed with gratitude for God's mercy and lovingkindnesses (plural) that allow us to use the imperative mood in our prayers to our Almighty Everlasting Father!

**Spurgeon - Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.** Salvation he had known, and had known it as the Lord's own; he had also felt the joy which arises from being saved in the Lord, but he had lost it for awhile, and therefore he longed for its restoration. None but God can give back this joy; He can do it; we may ask it; He will do it for His own glory and our benefit. **This joy comes not first, but follows pardon and purity:** in such order it is safe, in any other it is vain presumption or idiotic delirium.

**Joy of your salvation** - What a beautiful truth - salvation brings joy. Not happiness (which is derived from the root *hap* which describes that which depends on what *happens*) but joy which is supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22+) and is present independent of adverse circumstances or manifold afflictions. Note he is not praying to restore his salvation but the **joy** of it! He had not lost his salvation (cf [eternal security](#)) but he had lost the **joy** and we will also when we sin and fail to confess and seek forgiveness.

Sin brings sorrow.

Righteousness brings rejoicing

**Boice...**As long as David was living in sin he had no joy. His fellowship with God was broken (**Ed:** The Holy Spirit, the believer's

ONLY source of joy, was grieved, cp Ep 4:30+). Now that he has repented of his sin, found (**Ed**: experienced divine) cleansing, and is seeking a renewed spirit, he wants to have that joy again. How relevant to many people's thinking today. Many think that the way to joy or a good time is by sinning. They think that godliness is dull. Actually the opposite is the case. Sin brings sorrow. Righteousness brings rejoicing. Allowed to continue, sin will remove every good thing from our lives—joy, health, wealth, and at last even life itself. Only righteousness will restore them. One commentator notes wisely, "The fact that the psalmist prays for so many things [in Ps 51:7-12] indicates how many things he knew he had lost when he plunged into sin."

**Henry Drummond** - In reality, **joy** is as much a matter of cause and effect as pain. No one can get **joy** by merely asking for it. It is one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life, and, like all fruits, must be grown. (**Ed**: Grown in a convicted, confessed, repented, clean heart.)

**John Newton** wrote the following poem on **joy**...

Joy is a fruit that will not grow  
In nature's barren soil;  
All we can boast, till Christ we know,  
Is vanity and toil.

But where the Lord hath planted grace,  
And made His glories known,  
These fruits of heavenly joy and peace  
Are found, and there alone.

**Wiersbe** writes...Nehemiah 8:10 says that the joy of the Lord is our strength. When you enjoy doing something, the enjoyment gives you sufficient strength to do the task. On the other hand, all of us have tasks to perform that we don't enjoy. We do them out of duty and because it's the right thing to do, but they don't provide the strength that comes from joy. We need the joy of the Lord to witness for Him. Joy shows unsaved people that it is worthwhile to know Jesus. He is the Power for our service...Joy and willing obedience go together. When you enjoy doing something or when you enjoy the person for whom you are doing it, you serve willingly. David is saying, "I have been in bondage because I have not confessed my sin. Therefore, I lost my joy and my willing spirit. I lost that real delight that comes from obeying God." How can you restore joy? Confess your sin. Then look to Jesus Christ, not yourself. If you look at yourself, you won't rejoice. But if you look to Him, you will rediscover the joy of His salvation. God intends that you rejoice in your salvation. Have you lost the joy of your salvation? Do you miss the delight that comes from obeying the Lord? Make sure your life is free from sin, and then ask Him to restore your joy. ([Lost Joy](#))

**And sustain me with a willing spirit** - **Sustain** is in the **imperfect mood** which expresses an action, process or condition which is incomplete. The **imperfect** adds colour and movement by suggesting the "process" preliminary to its completion. Beloved, this is not just a one and done need (I'll speak for myself), but is a daily, yea even continual, need. My spirit is like a rechargeable battery, the energy of which dissipates during the day as a result of all of the interactions with our enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). Some think "spirit" could refer to the Holy Spirit. Either way, there is no way fallen men can have a willing spirit unless enabled to do so by the Holy Spirit.

**THOUGHT** - Spirit of the Living (life giving) God, "recharge" my flagging spirit today, to be energized to do the will of God which is good and acceptable and perfect (Ro 12:2b+).

**Adrian Rogers** - Sin saddens the heart. Look in verse 8: "Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." (Psalms 51:8) Look in verse 12: "**Restore** unto me the joy of thy salvation." (Psalms 51:12) Now he's not asking to have his salvation restored. **You can be saved and be miserable. The most miserable man on earth is not an unsaved man....**The most miserable man on earth is a saved man out of fellowship with God. Isn't that true? When God saves you, God doesn't fix you where you can't sin anymore. **He just fixes you where you can't sin and enjoy it anymore....**So here David is praying, "**Lord, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation....**"**Happiness** is like a thermometer: it registers conditions. **Joy** is like a thermostat: it controls conditions. It's the joy of the Lord that is your strength. Joy never changes. You're to have joy all the time. There's only one thing that can take away joy. Not circumstances. It is **sin**. And only one kind of sin: yours. Not what somebody else does. Nobody else's sin can take away your joy. A disobedient child cannot take away your joy. An unfaithful husband cannot take your joy. An ungodly government cannot take your joy....It is not joy that removes the pain; it is joy that helps you endure the pain. That's the joy of the Lord....If the joy is not there, friend, it is because you are not abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone has well said, "Joy is the flag that is flown from the castle of the heart, when the King is in residence." ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**Sustain** ([05564](#)) ([samak](#)) means to uphold as when one places something on a person or an animal and figuratively in this verse it describes God supporting the believer. The Septuagint (Lxx) translates **samak** with **sterizo** which is used in Peter's description of

the stabilizing effect of the God of all grace on those who have suffered for a while (1Pe 5:10+). David's prayer in this section reminds me of Paul's warning in First Corinthians "let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1Co 10:12+).

**THOUGHT** - The **only way** a believer can stand in a sin sick world is if God affirmatively answers this prayer for His stabilizing, sustaining Spirit energizing our walk! And that means we need to pray this prayer!

**A willing spirit** - David desired for God to make him willing to obey. Some such as Spurgeon see this a reference to the Holy Spirit. While I favor the former, I certainly would not discount the latter interpretation because we would not have a willing spirit unless His Spirit willed it in us! (cp Php 2:13-note). A human spirit that says "Not my will, but Thy will" is possible only by His Spirit's enablement.

The Hebrew word for **willing** is translated in the **Lxx** by the adjective **hegemonikos** (English - hegemony = preponderant influence or authority over others) which pertains to being in a supervisory capacity, guiding or leading, a translation which does suggest that the **spirit** David is referring to is primarily the Holy **Spirit**. Interesting!

**Thomas Alexander** writes that...A loving mother chooses a fitting place, and a fitting time, to let her little child fall; it is learning to walk, it is getting over confident, it may come to a dangerous place, and if possessed of all this confidence, may fall and destroy itself. So she permits it to fall at such a place, and in such a way as that it may be hurt, wholesomely hurt, but not dangerously so. It has now lost its confidence, and clings all the more fondly and trustingly to the strong hand that is able to hold up all its goings. So this David, this little child of the great God, has fallen; it is a sore fall, all his bones are broken, but it has been a precious and a profitable lesson to him; he has no confidence any longer in himself, his trust is not now in an arm of flesh (2Chr 32:8). "Uphold me with thy free spirit."

**Robert Murray M'Cheyne...**

I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian, that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace, so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation, nearer than other men.

**This is a lie of Satan.**

I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet it resists the spark, but when it becomes dry it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart, he deadens me to sin, so that if lawfully called through temptation I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh, for a sense of this! (**Ed**: Oh, to continually pray sustain me with a willing spirit!)

**Spurgeon - And sustain me with a willing spirit.** Conscious of weakness, mindful of having so lately fallen, he seeks to be kept on his feet by power superior to his own. That royal Spirit, whose holiness is true dignity, is able to make us walk as kings and priests, in all the uprightness of holiness; and He will do so if we seek His gracious upholding. Such influences will not enslave but emancipate us; for holiness is liberty, and the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit. In the roughest and most treacherous ways we are safe with such a keeper; in the best paths we stumble if left to ourselves. The praying for joy and upholding go well together; it is all over with joy if the foot is not kept (i.e., we don't walk in obedience to the Spirit); and, on the other hand, joy is a very upholding thing, and greatly aids holiness; meanwhile, the free, noble, loyal Spirit is at the bottom of both (joy and holiness).

**J R Miller** - In this prayer for renewal, he pleads also that the Holy Spirit may abide with him, be with him. He remembered Saul's terrible fate, when God took His Holy Spirit from him, and pleaded that the same calamity might not fall upon him. "Do not cast me from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from me." While he prayed for the continuance of God's Spirit upon him, he prayed also that his own spirit might be **constant, steadfast, and free**—that is, **willing**. In other words, **he desires the spirit of entire consecration to God's will and service.** ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

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**F J Austin** outlines this section...

### **I. Salvation Begets Joy**

- A. The joy of reconciliation.
- B. The joy of possession.
- C. The joy of anticipation.

### **II. This Joy Is Lost by Indulgence in Sin**

- A. The Christian sometimes falls into sin.

B. No man can sin and retain his peace of mind.

C. The departure of joy leaves a vacancy in the heart.

### III. Joy Will Be Restored upon True Repentance

What is true repentance? Not simply fear of punishment; but grief at having broken God's law, and grieved God's Spirit; combined with a desire to live a nobler, purer life. Forgiveness cannot be obtained while sin is retained. (Sermon Outlines on the Book of Psalms)

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**Restore** (same as **renew** in Ps 51:10 - [see longer note there](#)) (02318) (**chadash/hadas**) means to make like new and implies a restoration to a former state of something which has become faded or disintegrated (in David's case the joy destroyed by the deadly effect of unconfessed sin). To begin again (Reminds me of Jesus call to the church at Ephesus to repent and return to their first love - Rev 2:4-5+). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translate **chadash/hadas** not with the Greek verb *egkainizo* (used to translate *chadash* = renew in Ps 51:10) but with the verb **apodidomi** which means to pay back or give back, to restore to an original possessor.

**Joy** (used in Ps 51:8) (08342) (**sason** from **sus** = to exult, rejoice) almost universally it speaks of human happiness and abounding delight. **Sason** describes "a state of happiness, with a focus on making sounds and expressions of joy." (Swanson) **Baker** - It refers to joy, exultation toward God's King (Ps. 45:7); given to God's people (Ps. 51:8, 12); in His own people at deliverance (Ps. 105:43); over the testimonies and laws of God (Ps. 119:111). God is the joy of His people (Isa. 12:3). Joy will be removed from a rebellious people (Jer. 7:34; Joel 1:12). In God's restoration of His people, joy will be abundant (Zech. 8:19). ([Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament](#))

**Sason** is used in the great verse in Jeremiah 15:16+ "Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy (Lxx = [euphrosune](#) = joy, gladness) and the delight of my heart; For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts."

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sason** with a variety of Greek words - here the word **agalliasis** See *agalliamai* in Isa 22:13, 35:10, 51:3, 51:11. These words describe great exultation or extreme joy (He 1:9+). See study of the related verb **agalliao** which pictures on jumping for joy! Some uses of **sason** are translated with **euphraino** (Jer 7:34).

**NAS Usage:** gaiety(1), gladness(3), joy(15), joyously(1), rejoicing(2). *Sason* - 22v - Esther 8:16f; Ps 45:7; 51:8, 12; 105:43; 119:111; Isa 12:3; 22:13; 35:10; 51:3, 11; 61:3; Jer 7:34; 15:16; 16:9; 25:10; 31:13; 33:9, 11; Joel 1:12; Zech 8:19

**Salvation** (Lxx = *soterios* = bringing salvation, delivering, rescuing) (03468) (**yesha', yêsha'**) means deliverance, rescue, liberty, welfare, salvation (cp 2Sa 23:5+ where we see David in the midst of strife appeal to God's salvation based on his covenant relationship). **Yesha'/yesa'** is used by Micah who declares... "But as for me, I will watch expectantly (Lxx = *epiblepo* = look intently) for the Lord; I will wait (Lxx = *hupomeno*) for the God of my salvation (*yesha'/yesa'*; Lxx = *soter* = a Savior, One who rescues, delivers, preserves, clearly a reference to the Messiah!). My God will hear me." (Micah 7:7+).

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#### QUESTION - [What did David mean when he asked God to "restore to me the joy of your salvation" \(Psalm 51:12\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - There was a time when [King David](#) asked God to restore to him the joy of his salvation. That time came after the incident recorded in 2 Samuel 11+ of David committing [adultery with Bathsheba](#), the wife of one of his loyal soldiers. The sordid story involves not only adultery but Bathsheba's pregnancy, an attempted cover-up, and David's eventual murder of Bathsheba's husband. David then marries Bathsheba and believes that no one will ever know of his misdeeds. But the last part of verse 27 contains this ominous declaration: "But the thing David had done displeased the Lord."

In 2 Samuel 12+, the prophet [Nathan confronts David](#) with his sin, and David confesses (2Sa 12:14).

Psalm 51 is a song that David penned after this confrontation as noted in the title: "For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba."

Psalm 51 is a prayer of forgiveness and cleansing. Verses 1–9:

"Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity

and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
and justified when you judge.  
Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.  
Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.  
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.”

Verses 10–12 are perhaps the most famous of Psalm 51:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

In verse 11 David asks that the Holy Spirit not be removed from him. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit usually came upon a person to enable the performance of a certain task. If the Holy Spirit were removed from David, it would mean that he would be rejected by God as king in the same way that God had rejected Saul and removed His Spirit from him (1 Samuel 16:14).

Next, David asks God to restore the joy of his salvation. The time between David’s sin and Nathan’s confrontation was some months because the child had already been born. During that time, David suffered inner torment, as he describes in Psalm 32:3–4:

“When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.”

Despite all the steps David had taken to suppress the news of what he had done, he did not experience joy in the cover-up. However, once he confessed his sin to God, he received forgiveness, and his joy returned. Psalm 32 begins this way:

“Blessed is the one  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.  
Blessed is the one  
whose sin the Lord does not count against them  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.”

Psalm 32 ends with “Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!” (verse 11).

When David pleads with God to “restore to me the joy of your salvation,” he is asking that he would again have the fellowship with God that he once knew and enjoyed. David could not enjoy God’s fellowship while he had unconfessed sin.

Even today, we can lose the joy of our salvation. We will not lose salvation—sin will not separate the believer from God—but it can rob us of joy and the enjoyment of close fellowship with our Savior. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**A Lost Experience** - A pastor in Los Angeles visited a man and asked if he was a Christian. “Oh, yes, I was a member of a church

in Ohio,” he said, “and when I asked for my letter of church membership before coming west, I sat down and wrote out my Christian experience. I took them both and put them in a little box. I would like to show them to you.”

But when he got the box, it was evident that a mouse had gnawed its way into the container and destroyed the papers. He said to the pastor, “I have lost my Christian experience and my church letter.”

If all that the man lost was those two documents, it was no great loss. Many put great stock in a baptismal certificate or a church letter but have experienced no genuine work of grace in their heart. Only faith in the Savior will provide salvation.

Genuine Christians can also take a warning from this story. Their once vital “experience” may have been “put in a box” and allowed to deteriorate. They have failed to keep it fresh and vibrant by daily fellowship with the Lord through prayer and Bible study.

If this describes you, cry with David, **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation”** (Psalm 51:12). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
Show the way that Jesus has trod;  
Then I will tell of Your saving grace,  
Until the day when I see Your face.  
—Hess

**Faith in a creed can go stale—  
faith in Christ can be fresh every day.**

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**The Old Tractor** - My friend Gary restores tractors. He told me about an old John Deere that had been sitting in a farmer’s field for years. It had served its owner faithfully for decades.

When Gary was finally able to start the tractor, the engine was in such bad shape that it couldn’t have pulled a child’s wagon, much less a plow. The belts were cracked, the wires were split, the plugs were rusted, and the carburetor was way out of adjustment.

With loving hands, Gary went to work. He replaced the plugs and points and adjusted the carburetor. When he put it all back together and fired it up, its engine purred like a kitten. It can now pull a plow as strongly as it ever did. Under Gary’s restorative skill, it will do all it was designed to do.

In Psalm 51, David repented of his sin with Bathsheba and asked God to restore him to the place of fellowship he once enjoyed. He prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation” (Ps 51:10,12).

Through neglect or sin, have you ended up by the wayside spiritually? Turn right now to the Lord. Place yourself in His tender hands. Confess your sin, repent, and ask His forgiveness. He is waiting to restore you to Himself and make you a productive Christian again. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our sinfulness can sap our joy  
And make us feel far from the Lord;  
Confession and repentance, though,  
Provide the way to be restored.  
—Sper

**God specializes in restoration**

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**Fresh** - What do you think of when you hear the word **fresh**? When the weather is nice, my husband and I enjoy going to the farmers market so we can buy produce that was picked that very morning. To me, **fresh** means just-harvested fruits and vegetables —not stale or spoiled, but crisp and full of exquisite flavor.

I need that kind of freshness in my relationship with God. I can have too many **stale** attitudes—impatience, criticism, and selfishness —and not enough “longsuffering, kindness, ... gentleness,” “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22, 23+).

As David repented of the sin in his life, he prayed, **“Create in me a clean heart.”** Then he petitioned God: **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation”** (Ps. 51:10, 11, 12). Confession and repentance of our sin renews our fellowship with the Lord and allows us to joyously begin anew.

What better time than today to ask God to give you a newness of spirit, a freshness of faith, and a renewed appreciation of Him!

Lord, we want the fruit of our lives to always be “fresh and flourishing” (Ps. 92:14). Help us to experience Your love, compassion, and faithfulness that are “new every morning” (Lam. 3:22,23). Amen. --by Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Master is seeking a harvest  
In lives He's redeemed by His blood;  
He seeks for the fruit of the Spirit,  
And works that will glorify God.  
—Lehman

**To bear good fruit,  
clear out the weeds of sin.**

**Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.**

BGT Psalm 50:15 διδ ξω ν μουσ τ ς δο ς σου κα σεβε ς π σ πιστρ ψουσιν

LXE Psalm 51:13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and ungodly men shall turn to thee.

KJV Psalm 51:13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

NET Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach rebels your merciful ways, and sinners will turn to you.

CSB Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

ESV Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

NIV Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.

NLT Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you.

NRS Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

NJB Psalm 51:13 I shall teach the wicked your paths, and sinners will return to you.

NAB Psalm 51:15 I will teach the wicked your ways, that sinners may return to you.

YLT Psalm 51:13 I teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners unto Thee do return.

GWN Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach your ways to those who are rebellious, and sinners will return to you.

BBE Psalm 51:13 Then will I make your ways clear to wrongdoers; and sinners will be turned to you.

RSV Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will return to thee.

NKJ Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

ASV Psalm 51:13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

DBY Psalm 51:13 I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall return unto thee.

BHT Psalm 51:15 ´ááammüdü pôš`îm DüräkÊ<sup>9</sup>kä wüHa††ä`îm ´êlÊ<sup>9</sup>kä yäšû<sup>9</sup>bû

NIRV Psalm 51:13 Then I will teach your ways to those who commit lawless acts. And sinners will turn back to you.

RWB Psalm 51:13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted to thee.

WEB Psalm 51:13 {Then} will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted to thee.

- **Then:** Ps 32:5,8-10 Zec 3:1-8 Lu 22:32 Joh 21:15-17 Ac 2:38-41 9:19-22 2Co 5:8-20
- **ways:** Ps 25:4,8 Isa 2:3 Ac 13:10
- **converted:** Ps 19:7 Isa 6:10 Jer 31:18 Mt 18:3 Ac 3:19 15:3 26:18-20 Jas 5:19,20

**Then** - Time sensitive word which should prompt a question "What time is it?" It generally marks progression in a narrative. In this case, it marks when God's Spirit renews David's heart and spirit...THEN...Clearly David bases this assurance on the fact that God will answer his previous requests affirmatively. When the forgiving, giving God gives us a clean heart, a right spirit, His presence, His

enabling Spirit, the joy of our salvation and a willing spirit, THEN we will not just be able to teach, but we will want to teach other transgressors about God's "ways" and how He is mercifully magnanimous to sinners who come to Him with broken and contrite hearts!

**THOUGHT** - As a corollary, have you ever noticed how you resist or have little desire for witnessing for the Lord when you have unconfessed sin? Sin will always silence our speaking about Christ to sinners.

Do you think that you have sinned so heinously and horribly against the Almighty that He can never again use you? If so, you are wrong. This psalm is written for you and this verse clearly answers your question. If you think "God could never use me. You don't know what I've done." then you don't understand what Christ did on Calvary. You have underestimated the breadth and length and height and depth of God's forgiveness and His supernatural power to revive and restore a sinner to service in His Kingdom work! So what is the "condition"? Conviction of sin, confession of sin and contrition for sins. In short a broken and contrite heart He will not despise (Ps 51:17).

**I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You-** David's cover-up of sin also "covered" up his mouth, silencing his tongue so that he had no song and no witness (which is why he prayed "open my lips" in Ps 51:15).

**THOUGHT** - Have you lost your song of praise to God? Have you lost motivation to tell others about how they may be saved and live eternally in Heaven? If so, you might want to do a sin check-up to see if there is an unconfessed sin that is grieving the Spirit in His temple and sapping the power promised in Acts 1:8+. Do not be deceived (like David did for 9-12 months) thinking that you sin and get away with sin! Unconfessed sin will rob your joy and steal your witness, in effect "sealing" your lips from speaking the Gospel.

**Spurgeon...Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways.** It was his fixed resolve to be a teacher of others; and assuredly **none instruct others so well as those who have been experimentally taught of God themselves. Reclaimed poachers make the best gamekeepers!** Huntingdon's degree of S.S., or Sinner Saved, is more needful for a soul-winning evangelist than either M.A. or D.D. The pardoned sinner's matter will be good, for he has been taught in the school of experience, and his manner will be telling, for he will speak sympathetically, as one who has felt what he declares. The audience the Psalmist would choose is memorable—he would instruct **transgressors** like himself; others might despise them, but, "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." If unworthy to edify saints, he would creep in along with the sinners, and humbly tell them of divine love. The mercy of God to one is an illustration of his usual procedure, so that our own case helps us to understand His "ways." or His general modes of action: perhaps, too, David under that term refers to the preceptive part of the word of God, which, having broken, and having suffered thereby, he felt that he could vindicate and urge upon the reverence of other offenders.

**NET NOTE** on teach - the cohortative expresses the psalmist's resolve. This may be a vow or promise. If forgiven, the psalmist will "repay" the Lord by declaring God's mercy and motivating other sinners to repent....*Heb* "**your ways.**" The word "merciful" is added for clarification. God's "ways" are sometimes his commands, but in this context, where the teaching of God's ways motivates repentance (see the next line), it is more likely that God's merciful and compassionate way of dealing with sinners is in view. Thanksgiving songs praising God for his deliverance typically focus on these divine attributes (see Ps 34, 41, 116, 138).

**William Cowper** writes that in this passage...We see our duty craves that when we have received mercy from God for ourselves, we should make vantage of it for the edification of others. Every talent received from God should be put to profit, but specially the talent of mercy; as it is greatest, so the Lord requires greater fruit of it, for His own glory, and for the edification of our brethren. Seeing we are vessels of mercy, should not the scent and sweet odor of mercy go from us to others? This duty Christ craved from Peter: "And thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren." (Lk 22:32)

**J R Miller...**

Notice once more in this Psalm, David's thought about serving God. When he had been forgiven and the joy of salvation had been restored to his heart, he would begin to be a blessing to his neighbors and friends. We cannot bring others to Christ—when we have no joy of forgiveness in our own hearts. But the moment we are forgiven and the joy begins in us—we begin to desire to help others, to teach transgressors God's ways, and to lead sinners back home.

Other suggestions are found in the words which follow.

**The tongue of a forgiven man will sing aloud of God's righteousness.**

**His opened lips will speak forth God's praise.**

The character of the service which God desires from us, is sketched in the closing words—not sacrifice of animals or any possessions. The sacrifice that pleases God—is a penitent spirit and contrite heart.

[\(Devotional Hours with the Bible\)](#)



**Sinners will be converted to You** - Our great and mighty God is able to use our testimony of brokenness and restoration to draw others to be converted to Him.

**Converted** (07725) ([shub/sub](#)) which conveys the basic meaning of movement back to point of departure. To turn, return, go back, do again, restore. **Lxx** translates **shuwb** with **epistrepho** which means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea of epistrepho and in this present verse is a definite turn to God in conduct as well as in one's mind.

David uses the same verb **shuwb** in Psalm 19 describing the restorative (reviving Ps 119:25) power of the Word of God, the Law of Jehovah...

The law of the LORD is perfect, **restoring** the soul. (Ps 19:7)

**Spurgeon comments:** Making the man to be returned or restored to the place from which sin had cast him. The practical effect of the Word of God is to turn the man to himself, to his God, and to holiness; and the turn or conversion is not outward alone, "the soul" is moved and renewed. The great means of the conversion of sinners is the Word of God, and the more closely we keep to it in our ministry the more likely we are to be successful. It is God's Word rather than man's comment on God's Word which is made mighty with souls. When the law drives and the gospel draws, the action is different but the end is one, for by God's Spirit the soul is made to yield, and cries, "Turn me, and I shall be turned." Try men's depraved nature with philosophy and reasoning, and it laughs your efforts to scorn, but the Word of God soon works a transformation.

**Dr Barrick** writes...Even those believers who, like David, were adulterers and murderers might have a writing ministry or deal with people one-on-one in order to help others escape the shackles of sinful living. ([Psalm 51 Notes](#))

**Spurgeon...And sinners shall be converted unto thee.** My fall shall be the restoration of others. Thou wilt bless my pathetic testimony to the recovery of many who, like myself, have turned aside unto crooked ways. Doubtless this Psalm and the whole story of David, have produced for many ages the most salutary results in the conversion of transgressors, and so evil has been overruled for good.

**Charles Horne** comments...He that would employ his abilities, his influence, and his authority, in the reformation of others, must take care to reform himself, before he enters upon the work. "When thou art converted," said Christ to Peter, "strengthen thy brethren."—Luke 22:32. The history of David has "taught" us many useful lessons; such as the frailty of man, the danger of temptation, the torment of sin, the nature and efficacy of repentance, the mercy and the judgments of God, etc. by which many "sinners" have in all ages since been "converted," and many more will be converted, so long as the Scriptures shall be read, and the Fifty-First Psalm recited in the church. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

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## HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS

### Verse 12-13. A threefold desire.

To be happy -- "Restore," etc.

To be consistent -- "Uphold," etc.

To be useful -- "Then will I teach," etc. W. Jackson.

### Verse 13.

It is not our duty to seek the conversion of others until we are converted ourselves.

The greater enjoyment we have in the ways of God, the more faithfully and earnestly we shall make them known to others.

The more faithfully and earnestly we make them known to others the more they will be influenced by them.

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**Honest Evangelism** - If Christians were more honest about their own sinfulness, they would be more effective in reaching nonbelievers for Christ.

Philip Yancey told of a prostitute, sick and without food, who asked an inner-city Christian worker for help. When he suggested that she should go to a church, she replied, "Church! Why would I go there? They'd make me feel worse than I already do!"

We who go to church regularly tend to put on a happy face or look pious on Sunday morning. This may give the impression that we

never struggle with temptation or fall short of the high standard we profess. No wonder many street people or down-and-outers who visit church get the feeling that they are the only bad ones there.

This is not to suggest that we should make public all our sinful thoughts and actions. Rather, the solution to this situation begins with total honesty about ourselves like that expressed by David in Psalm 51. If we admit to ourselves our own sinful tendencies and recognize our own capacity for evil, we will not convey a holier-than-thou attitude. Down-and-out sinners will sense this, and God will then be able to use us to “teach transgressors [His] ways” (Ps. 51:13). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us to be honest about our sin and our need of Your grace. Help us to be the kind of people who draw others to You.

**To know the potential for sin in our own heart  
gives us a more sympathetic heart for sinners.**

**Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.**

BGT Psalm 50:16 σα με ξ α μ τ ω ν θε ς θε ς τ ς σωτηρ α ς μου γ α λ λ ι σ ε τ α ι γ λ σ σ μ ο υ τ ν δ ι κ α ι ο σ ν η ν σ ο υ

LXE Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation: and my tongue shall joyfully declare thy righteousness.

KJV Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

NET Psalm 51:14 Rescue me from the guilt of murder, O God, the God who delivers me! Then my tongue will shout for joy because of your deliverance.

CSB Psalm 51:14 Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing of Your righteousness.

ESV Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.

NIV Psalm 51:14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

NLT Psalm 51:14 Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.

NRS Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

NJB Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodshed, God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will acclaim your saving justice.

NAB Psalm 51:16 Rescue me from death, God, my saving God, that my tongue may praise your healing power.

YLT Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from blood, O God, God of my salvation, My tongue singeth of Thy righteousness.

GWN Psalm 51:14 Rescue me from the guilt of murder, O God, my savior. Let my tongue sing joyfully about your righteousness!

BBE Psalm 51:14 Be my saviour from violent death, O God, the God of my salvation; and my tongue will give praise to your righteousness.

RSV Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance.

NKJ Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

ASV Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

DBY Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

BHT Psalm 51:16 haccîlê<sup>9</sup>nî miDDâmîm ´éllôhîm ´élôhê Tûšû`âtî Tûrannên lûšônî cidqâte<sup>9</sup>kâ

NIRV Psalm 51:14 You are the God who saves me. I have committed murder. Take away my guilt. Then my tongue will sing about how right you are no matter what you do.

RWB Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

WEB Psalm 51:14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: {and} my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

- **Deliver:** Ps 26:9 55:23 Ge 9:6 42:22 2Sa 3:28 11:15-17 12:9 21:1
- **bloodguiltiness:** Heb. bloods, Eze 33:8 Ho 4:2 Ac 18:6 20:26
- **God:** Ps 38:22 68:20 88:1 Isa 12:2 45:17 Hab 3:18
- **tongue:** Ps 35:28 71:15-24 86:12,1
- **righteousness:** Ezra 9:13 Ne 9:33 Da 9:7,16 Ro 10:3

## RESCUE FROM GUILT AND PENALTY OF MURDER

**Deliver** ([nasal](#); Lxx - [rhuomai](#) - rescue in [aorist imperative](#)) **me from bloodguiltiness** (from bloodshed), **O God, the God of my salvation** ([teshu'ah](#); Lxx - [soterios](#)) - **NET** = "Rescue me from the guilt of murder, O God, the God who delivers me." [NET note](#) says literal reading is "from bloodshed" where "Bloodshed" stands by metonymy for the guilt which it produces." David was guilty of shedding innocent blood and he knew the penalty for this was his "blood," for the life is in the blood.

**Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness** - Sin will make you in effect "[mute](#)" in regard to true spirituality. You might fake it but that won't make it...pleasing to God! Set free from the guilt and shame of sins committed "unties" one's tongue to praise the Righteous One.

**Adrian Rogers** - sin in the life of a Christian shuts his mouth; it seals his lips. David says, "When I get right, then I'll be a soul winner. When I get right, then I'll be a singer. When I get right, then I will praise." Do you know how you can tell whether or not a person is backslidden or not? When a person is backslidden, as a general rule, singing just stops. Oh, he'll sing; but it doesn't come from his heart. Praise withers. Soul-winning stops altogether—because sin shuts his mouth. The devil says, "Who are you to be singing, 'What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart'? Who are you to be singing, 'What a mighty God we serve'? Who are you to be testifying, and telling somebody else they need to get saved, when you are such a miserable example, and you have no joy, and you have no peace, and you don't even have any real assurance in your own heart and in your own life?" The devil intimidates so many people because there is sin in their heart and in their life. ([See transcript - not exactly the same but close](#))

**Deliver** ([05337](#)) ([nasal](#)) means to deliver (set free) and is used especially of the power of one entity overcoming the power of another, in this case God over sin (and death - the wages of sin being death).

The **Lxx** translates **nasal** with **rhuomai** (from **rhúo** = to draw, drag along the ground) means to draw or snatch to oneself and invariably refers to a snatching from danger, evil or an enemy. In the Lxx of Ps 51:14, **rhuomai** is in the aorist imperative, a command calling for urgent attention. This basic idea is that of bringing someone out of severe and acute danger, and so to save, rescue, deliver, preserve. **Rhuomai** emphasizes greatness of peril from which deliverance is given by a mighty act of power. In the NT **rhuomai** is always associated with God as the Deliverer and with a person as the object of His deliverance. **Rhuomai** was used in a secular writing to describe a soldier going to a wounded comrade on the battlefield and carrying him to safety (he runs to the cry of his comrade to rescue him from the hands of the enemy).

The idea is blood for blood. Deliverance **from bloodguiltiness** is only possible through the blood of our Righteous Redeemer (Play a beautiful rendition of [There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood](#) and take time to ponder the mystery of the infinitely, eternally, precious blood of our Dear Dying Lamb). If you would like to worship a bit longer on the greatness of our Father's love [Think About His Love](#). And then **meditate** on the driving motivation in Paul's life when he explained that it was "the love of Christ" which controlled him, compelled him, constrained him (2Co 5:14-**note**) to live an "other worldly", supernatural "Galatians 2:20 (**note**) life".

**Salvation** (08668) (**teshu'ah**) means deliverance, safety, victory which is not by human or fleshly means (cp uses of teshu'ah in Ps 33:17; 108:12; 146:3; Pr 21:31) but by God (cp uses of teshu'ah in 2Chr 6:41; Ps 119:81; 144:10). The **Lxx** translates with the Greek noun **soteria**, which describes the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril. **Salvation** is a broader term in Greek than we often think of in English. Other concepts that are inherent in **soteria** include restoration to a state of safety, soundness, health and well being as well as preservation from danger of destruction.

**Then** - Always stop and ask "When?" Obviously when God delivers or rescues.

**NET NOTE** - *Heb* "my tongue will shout for joy your righteousness." Another option is to take the prefixed verbal form as a jussive, "may my tongue shout for joy." However, the pattern in vv. 12-15 appears to be prayer/request (see vv. 12, 14a, 15a) followed by promise/vow (see vv. 13, 14b, 15b).

**Joyfully** (07442) (**ranan**) means to shout for joy or to sing joyfully. The **Lxx** translates **ranan** with **agalliao** (from **agan** = much + **hallomai** = jump; gush, leap, spring up) which means literally to "jump much", "leap for joy", skip and jump with happy excitement and so to be exceedingly joyful, overjoyed or exuberantly happy.

Joyful singing of God's righteousness reminds one of the NT teaching of Paul of one of the first manifestations of a believer who is filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit (Ep 5:18-note)...

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual **songs, singing** and **making melody with your heart** to the Lord (Ep 5:19-note)

**Comment:** David's confession set his spirit free and allowed the Holy Spirit to put a song in his heart. Just try to sing joyfully of the righteousness of the Lord when you have unconfessed sin and an unrepentant heart which grieve the Holy Spirit.

**Spurgeon...**

**Deliver me from bloodguiltiness.** He had been the means of the death of Uriah, the Hittite, a faithful and attached follower, and he now confesses that fact. Besides, his sin of adultery was a capital offence, and he puts himself down as one worthy to die the death. Honest penitents do not fetch a compass and confess their sins in an elegant periphrasis, but they come to the point, call a spade a spade, and make a clean breast of all. What other course is rational in dealing with the Omniscient?

**O God, thou God of my salvation.** He had not ventured to come so near before. It had been, "O God," up till now, but here he cries, "Thou God of my salvation." Faith grows by the exercise of prayer. He confesses sin more plainly in this verse than before, and yet he deals with God more confidently: growing upward and downward at the same time are perfectly consistent. None but the King can remit the death penalty, it is therefore a joy to faith that God is King, and that he is the author and finisher of our salvation.

**And my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.** One would rather have expected him to say, I will sing of Thy mercy; but David can see the divine way of justification, that righteousness of God which Paul afterwards spoke of by which the ungodly are justified, and he vows to sing, yea, and to sing lustily of that righteous way of mercy. After all, it is the righteousness of divine mercy which is its greatest wonder. Note how David would preach in the last verse, and now here he would sing. We can never do too much for the Lord to whom we owe more than all. If we could be preacher, precentor, doorkeeper, pewopener, footwasher, and all in one, all would be too little to show forth all our gratitude. A great sinner pardoned makes a great singer. Sin has a loud voice, and so should our thankfulness have. We shall not sing our own praises if we be saved, but our theme will be the Lord our righteousness, in whose merits we stand righteously accepted.

**John Calvin** writes...Deliver me from bloods. The term bloods in Hebrew may denote any capital crime; and in my opinion he is here to be considered as alluding to the sentence of death, to which he felt himself to be obnoxious, and from which he requests deliverance.

**Charles Horne** comments...The unhappy criminal entreats in this verse, for the divine help and deliverance, as if he not only heard the voice of innocent blood crying from the ground, but as if he saw the murdered Uriah coming upon him for vengeance, like an armed man. If he can but obtain the pardon of this sin, he promises to publish to all the world the righteousness of God, who justifies sinners, and shows mercy to the penitent; though he must, at the same time, publish likewise his own heinous and horrid wickedness. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**Augustine** - When man uncovers his sin, God covers it. When man cloaks, God strips bare. When man confesses, God pardons.

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - In this SOLEMN CONFESSION, it is pleasing to observe that David plainly names his sin. He does not call it manslaughter, nor speak of it as an imprudence by which an unfortunate accident occurred to a worthy man, but he calls it by its true name, bloodguiltiness. He did not actually kill the husband of Bathsheba; but still it was planned in David's heart that Uriah should be slain, and he was before the Lord his murderer.

Learn in confession to be honest with God.

Do not give fair names to foul sins.

Call them what you will.

They will smell no sweeter.

What God sees them to be, that do you labour to feel them to be; and with all openness of heart acknowledge their real character. Observe, that David was evidently oppressed with the heinousness of his sin. It is easy to use words, but it is difficult to feel their meaning. The fifty-first Psalm is the photograph of a contrite spirit. Let us seek after the like brokenness of heart; for however excellent our words may be, if our heart is not conscious of the hell-deservingness of sin, we cannot expect to find forgiveness.

Our text has in it AN EARNEST PRAYER-it is addressed to the God of salvation. It is his prerogative to forgive; it is his very name and office to save those who seek his face. Better still, the text calls him the God of my salvation. Yes, blessed be his name, while I am yet going to him through Jesus' blood, I can rejoice in the God of my salvation.

The psalmist ends with A COMMENDABLE VOW: if God will deliver him he will sing-nay, more, he will "sing aloud." Who can sing in any other style of such a mercy as this! But note the subject of the song-"THY RIGHTEOUSNESS." We must sing of the finished work of a precious Saviour; and he who knows most of forgiving love will sing the loudest.

**Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.**

BGT Psalm 50:17 κ ρι ε τ χ ε λ η μ ο υ ν ο ξ ι ε ι ς κ α τ σ τ μ α μ ο υ ν α γ γ ε λ ε τ ν α ν ε σ ν σ ο υ

LXE Psalm 51:15 O Lord, thou shalt open my lips; and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

KJV Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

NET Psalm 51:15 O Lord, give me the words! Then my mouth will praise you.

CSB Psalm 51:15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.

ESV Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

NIV Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

NLT Psalm 51:15 Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you.

NRS Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

NJB Psalm 51:15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will speak out your praise.

NAB Psalm 51:17 Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim your praise.

YLT Psalm 51:15 O Lord, my lips thou dost open, And my mouth declareth Thy praise.

GWN Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will tell about your praise.

BBE Psalm 51:15 O Lord, let my lips be open, so that my mouth may make clear your praise.

RSV Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

NKJ Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

ASV Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open thou my lips; And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

DBY Psalm 51:15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.

BHT Psalm 51:17 ´ádönäy Süpätay TipTäH ûpî yaGGîd Tühilläte<sup>9</sup>kä

NIRV Psalm 51:15 Lord, open my lips so that I can speak. Then my mouth will praise you.

RWB Psalm 51:15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

WEB Psalm 51:15 O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

- **O Lord:** Ge 44:16 1Sa 2:9 Eze 16:63 Mt 22:12 Ro 3:19
- **open:** Ex 4:11 Eze 3:27 29:21 Mk 7:34
- **mouth:** Ps 63:3-5 119:13 Heb 13:15)

**O Lord, open my lips - NET** = "O Lord, give me the words" **Derek Kidner** notes that...In the light of verse 14b, the prayer open thou my lips is no mere formula but the cry of one whose conscience has shamed him into silence. He longs to worship freely, gratefully again; and he believes that by the grace of God he will. Seen in its true setting, this heartfelt, humble plea leads the worshipper in one step from confession to the brink of praise.

**Spurgeon...O Lord, open Thou my lips.** He is so afraid of himself that he commits his whole being to the divine care, and fears to speak till the Lord unstops his shame-silenced mouth. How marvelously the Lord can open our lips, and what divine things we poor simpletons pour forth under His inspiration! (**Ed:** And what fleshly things when not under His inspiration!) This prayer of a penitent is a golden petition for a preacher. Lord, I offer it for myself and my brethren. But it may stand in good stead any one whose shame for sin makes him stammer in his prayers, and when it is fully answered, the tongue of the dumb begins to sing.

**Wilson** suggests...David seems to have the case of the leper before his mind, with the upper lip covered, and only crying unclean, unclean; and he prays as a spiritual leper to be enabled, with freedom and fulness, to publish abroad the praise of his God. W. Wilson.

**John Calvin** - The meaning, usually attached to the expression is, that God would so direct his tongue by the Spirit as to fit him for singing his praises. But though it is true that God must supply us with words, and that if He does not, we cannot fail to be silent in His praise, David seems rather to intimate that his mouth must be shut until God called him to the exercise of thanksgiving by extending pardon. n.

#### **John Boys...**

O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. As man is a little world in the great, so the tongue is a great world in the little (Jas 3:5). It has no mean; it is either a great evil, or a great good. If good the tongue is a walking library, a whole university of edifying knowledge; but if bad (Jas 3:6), "a world of wickedness." No better dish for God's public service, when it is well seasoned, but, none worse, when ill handled. So that if we desire to be doorkeepers in God's house, let us entreat God first to be a doorkeeper in our house, that He would shut the wicket (gate) of our mouth against unsavory speech (Ps 141:3), and open the door of our lips, that our mouth may show forth His praise. This was David's prayer, and ought to be our practice, where we observe three points: **Who?** The Lord; **What?** Open my lips; **Why?** That my mouth shall show forth thy praise (Cp interrogation of text with the 5W/H'S).

For the first -- man by himself cannot untie the strings of his own stammering tongue, but it is God only Who opens "a door of utterance." (Col 4:3-note). When we have a good thought, it is (as the school doth speak) *gratia infusa* (in order to make dark); when a good word, *gratia effusa* (in order to give exhilaration); when a good work, *gratia diffusa* (in order to spread out). Man is a lock, the Spirit of God has a key, "which opens and no man shuts;" again, "shuts and no man opens." (Rev 3:7). He opened the heart of Lydia to conceive well (Acts 16:14), the ears of the prophet to hear well (Isa 50:1-11), the eyes of Elisha servant to see well (2Ki 6:17), and here the lips of David to speak well. And therefore, whereas in the former verse he might seem too peremptory, saying, My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness; he does, as it were, correct himself by this later edition and second speech: O Lord, I find myself most unable to sing or say, but open my lips, and touch my tongue, and then I am sure my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

**Charles Horne** comments...The mouth which sin had closed, can only be opened by pardon: and to show this, he who came, conferring pardon, caused the tongue of the dumb to speak, and to sing praises to the Lord God of Israel. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

**That my mouth may declare Your praise** - Spurgeon says "If God opens the mouth he is sure to have the fruit of it. According to the porter at the gate is the nature of that which comes out of man's lips; when vanity, anger, falsehood, or lust unbar me door, the foulest villainies troop out; but if the Holy Spirit opens the wicket (gate), then grace, mercy, peace, and all the graces come forth in tuneful dances, like the daughters of Israel when they met David returning with the Philistine's head."

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#### **HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS**

When God does not open our lips we had better keep them closed.

When He does open them we ought not to close them.

When he opens them it is not to speak in our own praise, and seldom in praise of others, but always in His own praise.

We should use this prayer whenever we are about to speak in his name. "O Lord, open," etc.

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## **Praise from Pure Hearts**

A broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51:17

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 51:7-17

During my friend Myrna's travels to another country, she visited a church for worship. She noticed that as people entered the sanctuary they immediately knelt and prayed, facing away from the front of the church. My friend learned that people in that church confessed their sin to God before they began the worship service.

This act of humility is a picture to me of what David said in Psalm 51: "My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise" (v. 17). David was describing his own remorse and repentance for his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. Real sorrow for sin involves adopting God's view of what we've done—seeing it as clearly wrong, disliking it, and not wanting it to continue.

When we are truly broken over our sin, God lovingly puts us back together. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This forgiveness produces a fresh sense of openness with Him and is the ideal starting point for praise. After David repented, confessed, and was forgiven by God, he responded by saying, "Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise" (Ps. 51:15).

Humility is the right response to God's holiness. And praise is our heart's response to His forgiveness. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear God, help me never to excuse or minimize my sin. Please meet me in my brokenness, and let nothing hold me back from praising Your name.

Praise is the song of a soul set free.

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**Psalm 51:16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

BGT Psalm 50:18 τι ε θ λησας θυσ αν δωκα ν λοκαυτ ματα ο κ ε δοκ σεις

LXE Psalm 51:16 For if thou desiredst sacrifice, I would have given it: thou wilt not take pleasure in whole-burnt-offerings.

KJV Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

NET Psalm 51:16 Certainly you do not want a sacrifice, or else I would offer it; you do not desire a burnt sacrifice.

CSB Psalm 51:16 You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering.

ESV Psalm 51:16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

NIV Psalm 51:16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

NLT Psalm 51:16 You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering.

NRS Psalm 51:16 For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

NJB Psalm 51:16 Sacrifice gives you no pleasure, burnt offering you do not desire.

NAB Psalm 51:18 For you do not desire sacrifice; a burnt offering you would not accept.

YLT Psalm 51:16 For Thou desirest not sacrifice, or I give it, Burnt-offering Thou acceptest not.

GWN Psalm 51:16 You are not happy with any sacrifice. Otherwise, I would offer one to you. You are not pleased with burnt offerings.

BBE Psalm 51:16 You have no desire for an offering or I would give it; you have no delight in burned offerings.

RSV Psalm 51:16 For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased.

NKJ Psalm 51:16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

ASV Psalm 51:16 For thou delightest not in sacrifice; Else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.

DBY Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.

BHT Psalm 51:18 Kî lô´-taHPöc ze<sup>o</sup>baH wü´eTTë<sup>o</sup>nâ `ôlä lö´ tircè

NIRV Psalm 51:16 You don't take delight in sacrifice. If you did, I would bring it. You don't take pleasure in burnt offerings.

RWB Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

WEB Psalm 51:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice: else would I give {it}: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.

- **delight:** Ps 51:6 Ex 21:14 Nu 15:27,30,31 35:31 Dt 22:22 Ho 6:6
- **otherwise:** Ps 40:6 50:8 Pr 15:8 21:27 Isa 1:11-15 Jer 7:22,23,27 Am 5:21-23 Heb 10:5,6

### Related Passages:

Micah 6:6-8+ With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? 7 Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; **And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?**

## WHAT DOES NOT PLEASE GOD

**For** - [term of explanation](#). David explains why praise is better, an explanation that continues into the next verse. God is never pleased with sacrifices that reflect external acts of merely "going through the motions" but only delights in worship that flows from a repentant heart. **NET NOTE** - If taken as causal or explanatory ("for", cf. NRSV), the verse would explain why the psalmist is pleading for forgiveness, rather than merely offering a sacrifice.

**You do not delight** ([chaphets](#); Lxx - [thelo](#)) **in sacrifice** - Praise (from a right heart) is better than sacrifice. The key is that the heart must be right with God, for neither praise nor sacrifice is acceptable (pleasing) unless the heart is right! Ritual without genuine repentance is useless.

**Spurgeon** says "This was the subject of the last Psalm. The Psalmist was so illuminated as to see far beyond the symbolic ritual; his eye of faith gazed with delight upon the actual atonement. (**Ed:** In other words the sacrifices by themselves were but pictures of the greater work of God on the Cross and as such could only be "seen" with the eye of faith. Sacrifices that are mechanical or rote are useless, even as mechanical, rote worship and praise is worthless, no matter how emotion is the participant. God is ever examining the heart before He looks at the actions!)"

The **Lxx** translates **chaphets** is Ps 51:16 with **thelo** which describes the exercise of the will and motivated by inclination to be pleased with something.

**Otherwise I would give it;** - **Spurgeon** comments "He would have been glad enough to present tens of thousands of victims if these would have met the case. Indeed, anything which the Lord prescribed he would cheerfully have rendered. We are ready to give up all we have if we may but be cleared of our sins; and when sin is pardoned our joyful gratitude is prepared for any sacrifice. "Thou delightest not in burnt offering." He knew that no form of burnt sacrifice was a satisfactory propitiation. His deep soul-need made him look from the type to the antitype, from the external rite to the inward grace."

**You are not pleased with burnt offering** ([olah](#); Lxx - [holokautoma](#)) - **Spurgeon** - "He knew that no form of burnt sacrifice was a satisfactory propitiation. His deep soul need made him look from the type to the antitype, from the external rite to the inward grace." (from works of man to the finished work of Christ - Jn 19:30+)



**NET NOTE** - *You do not desire a burnt sacrifice.* The terminology used in v. 16 does not refer to expiatory sacrifices, but to dedication and communion offerings. This is not a categorical denial of the sacrificial system in general or of the importance of such offerings. The psalmist is talking about his specific situation. Dedication and communion offerings have their proper place in worship (see v. 19), but God requires something more fundamental, a repentant and humble attitude (see v. 17), before these offerings can have real meaning.

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**Delight (02654) (chaphets)** means to have pleasure, to have favor, to be pleased, to feel great favor towards something and to desire and/or be willing to do something not by force implying voluntary choice. In the OT the idea of **delight** means much more than merely 'to long for' but in Hebrew psychology the whole personality was involved in delight. The idea includes a longing for something that promises enjoyment or satisfaction.

**Swanson** - 1. (qal) desire, want, i.e., have a feeling or attitude to experience or possess an object (Dt 25:7); 2. (qal) delight, take pleasure in, be eager, i.e., have a fondness or affection for an object or experience (Nu 14:8); 3. (qal) be willing, i.e., to do something not by force, implying a voluntary choice (Ru 3:13)

**Leon Wood** - The basic meaning is to feel great favor towards something. Its meaning differs from the parallel roots, āmad, āšaq, and rāâ, in that they connote less emotional involvement. āmad and āšaq are usually translated "desire," and rāâ "accept," favor being based on need, or judgment of approval. In the case of āpē, the object solicits favor by its own intrinsic qualities. The subject is easily attracted to it because it is desirable. A fourth root, gîl, somewhat parallel, connotes even greater emotional involvement. Here the subject gives expression to his delight in a joyful attitude and conduct. The root āpē is used more frequently than the other words, a total of 123 times, including the verb and its derivatives. āpē occurs only in the Qal stem, and it means "to experience emotional delight." This delight may be felt by men or by God. Men are said to experience it in respect to women. Shechem, son of Hamor, had "delight" in Jacob's daughter Dinah (Gen 34:19). The contestants in King Ahasuerus's beauty contest did not return to him after the first viewing unless he had "delight" in them (Esther 2:14). Men also experience it with other men. When King Saul wanted David to marry his daughter Michal, he instructed his servants to inform David that the king had "delight" in him (1Sa 18:22). This delight may be experienced in respect to matters and things. Joab used the word when he asked David why he persisted in having a census taken, or the army mustered (see pāqad), i.e. why he had "delight" in it (2Sa 24:3). The word is also used in reference to people delighting in certain activities. King Ahasuerus asked Haman what should be done to the man whom the king "delighted" to honor (Est 6:6). Still another use of the word is in an absolute sense, as in a repeated expression of Song: "Nor awake (my) love, until he please" (Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4). The word is used of God having delight in certain people. In David's song of deliverance, he says that God provided for him because he "delighted" in him (2Sa 22:20). The Queen of Sheba expressed a blessing to God because he "delighted" in Solomon (1Ki 10:9). God is said to experience this delight toward good works of men. For instance, he "delights" in his sabbath being kept and his law observed (Isa 56:4), in "mercy" and "knowledge of God" (Hos 6:6), and in "truth" (Ps 51:8). In respect to himself, God engages in activities in which he takes "delight" (Ps 115:3; 135:6). Samson's father, Manoah, feared death for himself and wife because the Angel of the Lord had appeared to them, but his wife replied that had God "delighted" to do this, he would not have received their sacrifices. (TWOT)

**Chaphets** - 70 v - **delight(15), delighted(7), delights(8), desire(9), desired(3), desired\*(1), desires(5), favors(1), have any pleasure(1), have... delight(2), have... pleasure(1), pleased(6), pleases(7), take pleasure(1), take... pleasure(2), wish(2), wished(1), wishes(1)** Gen 34:19; Num 14:8; Deut 21:14; 25:7f; Judg 13:23; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sam 2:25; 18:22; 19:1; 2 Sam 15:26; 20:11; 22:20; 24:3; 1 Kgs 9:1; 10:9; 2 Chr 9:8; Esth 2:14; 6:6f, 9, 11; Job 9:3; 13:3; 21:14; 33:32; Ps 18:19; 22:8; 37:23; 40:6, 8; 41:11; 51:6, 16, 19; 68:30; 73:25; 109:17; 112:1; 115:3; 119:35; 135:6; 147:10; Pr 18:2; 21:1; Eccl 8:3; Song 2:7; 3:5; 8:4; Isa 1:11; 13:17; 42:21; 53:10; 55:11; 56:4; 58:2; 62:4; 65:12; 66:3f; Jer 6:10; 9:24; 42:22; Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11; Hos 6:6; Jonah 1:14; Mic 7:18; Mal 2:17

**Burnt offering (05930)('olah** from 'alah = to ascend and thus the picture of **going up** in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which **goes up** in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, as described here by David in Ps 51:16-17] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and

**Related Resource:**

- [Why does God desire mercy and acknowledgement of Him instead of sacrifice \(Hosea 6:6\)? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/Why-does-God-desire-mercy-and-acknowledgement-of-Him-instead-of-sacrifice-Hosea-6-6.html)

**Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.**

BGT Psalm 50:19 θυσια τ θε πνεμα συντετριμμ νον καρδ αν συντετριμμ νην κα τεταπεινωμ νην θε ς ο κ ξουθεν σει

LXE Psalm 51:17 Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise.

KJV Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

NET Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices God desires are a humble spirit— O God, a humble and repentant heart you will not reject.

CSB Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.

ESV Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

NIV Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

NLT Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

NRS Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

NJB Psalm 51:17 Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken, contrite heart you never scorn.

NAB Psalm 51:19 My sacrifice, God, is a broken spirit; God, do not spurn a broken, humbled heart. III

YLT Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A heart broken and bruised, O God, Thou dost not despise.

GWN Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. O God, you do not despise a broken and sorrowful heart.

BBE Psalm 51:17 The offerings of God are a broken spirit; a broken and sorrowing heart, O God, you will not put from you.

RSV Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

NKJ Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.

ASV Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

DBY Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

BHT Psalm 51:19 zı|bHê ´élöhîm rû<sup>a</sup>H nišBärâ leb-nišBär wünidKè ´élöhîm lö´ tibzè

NIRV Psalm 51:17 The greatest sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. God, you will gladly accept a heart that is broken because of sadness over sin.

RWB Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

WEB Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God {are} a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

- **sacrifices:** Ps 107:22 Mk 12:33 Ro 12:1 Php 4:18 Heb 13:16 1Pe 2:5
- **broken spirit:** Ps 34:18 147:3 2Ki 22:19 Isa 57:15 61:1, 2, 3 66:2 Eze 9:3,4,6 Mt 5:3 Lk 18:11-14
- **You will not despise:** Ps 22:24 102:17 2Ch 33:12,13 Am 5:21 Lk 7:39-50 15:2-7,10,21-32)

**Spurgeon** exhorts all believers...

Let us seek after the like brokenness of heart; for however excellent our words may be, if our heart is not conscious of the hell-deservingness of sin, we cannot expect to find forgiveness.

**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit - Spurgeon** - All sacrifices are presented to thee in one, by the man whose broken heart presents the Saviour's merit to thee. When the heart mourns for sin, thou art better pleased than when the bullock bleeds beneath the axe. "A broken heart" is an expression implying deep sorrow, embittering the very life; it carries in it the idea of all but killing anguish in that region which is so vital as to be the very source of life. So excellent is a spirit humbled and mourning for sin, that it is not only a sacrifice, but it has a plurality of excellences, and is preeminently God's *sacrifices*.

**A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise - Spurgeon** - A heart crushed is a fragrant heart. Men contemn those who are contemptible in their own eyes, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He despises what men esteem, and values that which they despise. Never yet has God spurned a lowly, weeping penitent, and never will he while God is love, and while Jesus is called the man who receiveth sinners. Bulls and rams he desires not, but contrite hearts he seeks after; yea, but one of them is better to him than all the varied offerings of the old Jewish sanctuary.

**THOUGHT** - God does not receive "broken" (defiled) animals as sacrifices (Mal 1:6, 7, 8), but He always receives broken hearts! Have you committed some heinous, even embarrassing sin against your LORD? The way back begins with a heart that is broken over your sin against a holy God. That is a sacrifice God will never reject!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Have you ever studied the broken things in the Bible? A woman broke a vessel at the feet of Jesus and anointed Him (Mk 14:3, 4, Mt 26:6-13). Jesus took bread and broke it as a picture of His body given for us (Mt 26:26). God uses broken things, and He starts with broken hearts. This is what repentance is all about. God doesn't listen to the lips. He doesn't measure a material sacrifice. He looks at the heart and says, "If your heart is broken, then I can cleanse it..." Even though no sacrifice was available for his sin at the time, God looked down the corridors of time and saw a cross where Jesus Christ would die for David's sin. God looks at the heart, not the hand. He wants sincerity from the heart, not religious routine. A broken heart is not remorse, nor is it regret. It is repentance, a turning away from sin. It's telling God you hate sin, are judging it and claiming his forgiveness. Bring to Him the sacrifice of a contrite heart. ([Psalm 51:16-17 Broken Things](#))

**Ron Mattoon** explains a **broken and contrite heart**...The idea of these two words (Hebrew = **shabar** and **dakah**) deals with humility, submission, shaping and surrender. An object which has been broken has succumbed to the power of a greater force. The blacksmith with his hammer molds and shapes the metal into his image and will. The metal yields to the flame and the hammer over time. The **broken and contrite heart** is one that is yielded to the will and power of God in his life. The flame of trials, trouble, and tribulation and the hammer of hurt, pain, suffering, and chastisement bring the person to a point where he raises the white flag of "repentance and surrender" to the Lord. The spirit of humility, openness, and teachableness of such a person says, "I repent. Here am I. Do what you wish in my life. Mold me, make me, or break me into what you want me to be. Lead my life and I will follow and trust in you." This is the sacrifice and offering that God wants from us. He wants us to offer a heart that is tender and yielded to Him. This is what He values. He will not despise or treat with contempt someone who has a heart like this. ([Treasures From Treasured Psalms](#))

**Ryken** - The crushing events of life do not automatically make one contrite. They may result either in bitterness (Ex 1:14; Ru 1:20-note) or genuine contrition as with Nebuchadnezzar (Da 4:37-note). **Broken/contrite** must therefore be distinguished from actions that leave one devastated, immobilized, crushed, hardened or embittered. The **contrite**, the person broken in the right place, has been bruised or crushed in a way that results in true humility. This person does not carry the anger, fear of punishment or lowered self-esteem that characterize the bitter person. Adversity or a heightened awareness of sin can result in a stripping away of the natural pride, leaving a tender and contrite heart. One passage that deeply shapes the image of contrition is Psalm 51, in which David, humbled by the prophetic denouncement of his sin with Bathsheba, declares that "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Ps 51:17 NIV). In this psalm David also uses the related image of being brokenhearted. (Online [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#))

**Thomas Blackley** in his comments on Ps 147:3 describes a broken heart...The broken in heart is one whose heart is affected with

the evil of sin, and weeps bitter tears on account of it; one who feels sorrow, shame, and anguish, on the review of his past sinful life, and his base rebellion against a righteous God. Such a one has a broken heart. His heart is broken at the sight of his own ingratitude -- the despite done by him to the strivings of the Holy Spirit. His heart is broken when he considers the numberless invitations made to him in the Scriptures, all of which he has wickedly slighted and despised. His heart is broken at the recollection of a thousand kind providences to him and to his family, by day and by night, all sent by God, and intended for his moral, spiritual, and eternal benefit, but by him basely and wantonly abused. His heart is broken at the consideration of the love and compassion of the adorable Redeemer; the humiliation of his birth; the devotedness of his life; the reproach, the indignity of his sufferings; the ignominy and anguish of his death. His heart is broken when his conscience assures him that all this humiliation, this suffering, this death, was for him, who had so deliberately and repeatedly refused the grace which the blood and righteousness of Christ has purchased. It is the sight of Calvary that fills him with anguish of spirit, that overwhelms him with confusion and self abasement. While he contemplates the amazing scene, he stands, he weeps, he prays, he smites upon his breast, he exclaims, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And adds, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The broken in heart must further be understood as one who seeks help from God alone, and will not be comforted till he speaks peace to his soul.

It is interesting to note that Martin Luther used **contrite** or **contrition** four times in his "Ninety-Five Theses" in his historic statement which had as a principle purpose the urging of true repentance.

There is a line in **Rock of Ages** which I think accurately pictures a **broken and contrite spirit**...

**Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.**

**J. J. Stewart Perowne**... When speaking of thankfulness, we might have expected him to say, "a joyful heart, or a thankful heart," but instead of that he says, "a contrite heart." For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin: this will still continue. And the deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation.

**The tender, humble, broken heart,  
is therefore the best thank offering.**

There are men and women whose self-righteousness would never allow them to descend to the depths of immorality committed by David and yet sadly, whose hearts remain stony hard and almost incapable of penitence (because of the pride of their self righteousness). This brings to mind Jesus' powerful teaching on the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer...

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a **Pharisee**, and the other a **tax-gatherer**. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get. But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful (hilaskomai = be propitious, make reconciliation - Christ is the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins 1Jn2:2) to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified (dikaioo = declared righteous) rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14)

Behold, I fall before your face;  
My only refuge is your grace.  
No outward forms can make me clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within.

he picture of **brokenness and contrition** is seen in several other passages...

The LORD is near to the **brokenhearted (Lxx = Suntribo** from **sun** = together, with + **tribo** = break > crush completely), And saves those who are **crushed** (dakka' = same Hebrew word translated "contrite" in following verse) in spirit. (Ps 34:18)

**Comment:** Crushed (dakka') Pertains to being humble and unpretentious, as a figurative extension of an object in a low position due to pressure placed on it.

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the **contrite** (dakka' = bruised, broken in pieces, smitten) and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the **contrite**. (Isa 57:15)

He heals the **brokenhearted (Lxx = Suntribo** from **sun** = together, with + **tribo** = break > crush completely), And binds up their wounds. (Ps 147:3)

**Spurgeon:** This the Holy Spirit mentions as a part of the glory of God, and a reason for our declaring his praise: the Lord is not only a Builder, but a Healer; he restores broken hearts as well as broken walls. The kings of the earth think to be great through their loftiness; but Jehovah becomes really so by his condescension. Behold, the Most High has to do with the sick and the sorry, with the wretched and the wounded! He walks the hospitals as the good Physician! His deep sympathy with mourners is a special mark of his goodness. Few will associate with the despondent, but Jehovah chooses their company, and abides with them till he has healed them by his comforts. He deigns to handle and heal broken hearts: he himself lays on the ointment of grace, and the soft bandages of love, and thus binds up the bleeding wounds of those convinced of sin. This is compassion like a God. Well may those praise him to whom he has acted o gracious a part. The Lord is always healing and binding: this is no new work to him, he has done it of old; and it is not a thing of the past of which he is now weary, for he is still healing and still binding, as the original hath it. Come, broken hearts, come to the Physician who never fails to heal: uncover your wounds to him who so tenderly binds them up!

Return, O wanderer, return!  
And seek an injured Father's face;  
Those warm desires that in you burn  
Were kindled by recovering grace.

Return, O wanderer, return!  
Your Savior bids your spirit live;  
Go to his bleeding side, and learn  
How freely Jesus can forgive.

Return, O wanderer, return!  
Regain your lost lamented rest;  
Jehovah's melting affections yearn  
To clasp his Ephraim to his breast.

[\(Winslow\)](#)

## BROKENNESS ALONG THE CALVARY ROAD

**Roy Hession** in his simple but excellent book dealing with personal revival entities his first chapter **BROKENNESS...**

We want to be very simple in this matter of Revival. Revival is just the life of the Lord Jesus poured into human hearts. Jesus is always victorious. In heaven they are praising Him all the time for His victory. Whatever may be our experience of failure and barrenness, He is never defeated. His power is boundless. And we, on our part, have only to get into a right relationship with Him, and we shall see His power being demonstrated in our hearts and lives and service, and victorious life will fill us and overflow through us to others. And that is Revival in its essence.

BROKEN WILLS:  
BREAKING THE PROUD SELF  
DYING TO SELF

If, however, we are to come into this right relationship with Him, the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to His will. To be broken is the beginning of Revival. It is painful, humiliating, but it is the only way. It is being "Not I, but Christ" (Gal 2:20-note), and a "**C**" is a bent "**I**." The Lord Jesus cannot live in us fully and reveal Himself through until the proud self within us is broken. This simply means that the hard unyielding self, which justifies itself, wants its own way, stands up for its rights, and seeks its own glory, at last bows its head to God's will, admits its wrong, gives up its own way to Jesus, surrenders its rights and discards its own glory - that the Lord Jesus might have all and be all. In other words it is dying to **self** and **self**-attitudes. As we look honestly at our Christian lives, we can see how much of this self there is in each of us.

It is so often self who tries to live the Christian life (the mere fact that we use the word 'try' indicates that it is self who has the responsibility).

It is **self**, too, who is often doing Christian work. It is always **self** who gets irritable and envious and resentful and critical and worried. It is **self** who is hard and unyielding in its attitudes to others. It is **self** who is shy and self-conscious and reserved. No wonder we need breaking. As

long as **self** is in control, God can do little with us, for all the fruit of the Spirit (they are enumerated in Galatians 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note), with which God longs to fill us, are the complete antithesis of the hard, unbroken spirit within us and presupposes that it has been crucified.

Being broken is both God's work and ours. He brings His pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice. If we are really open to conviction as we seek fellowship with God (and willingness for the light is the prime condition of fellowship with God), God will show us the expressions of this proud, hard self that cause Him pain. Then it is, we can stiffen our necks and refuse to repent or we can bow the head and say, "Yes, Lord."

Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God.

And inasmuch as this conviction is continuous, we shall need to be broken continually. And this can be very costly, when we see all the yielding of rights and selfish interests that this will involve, and the confessions and restitutions that may be sometimes necessary. For this reason, we are not likely to be broken except at the Cross of Jesus. The willingness of Jesus to be broken for us is the all-compelling motive in our being broken too (read 2Co 5:14-note). We see Him, Who is in the form of God, counting not equality with God a prize to be grasped at and hung on to, but letting it go for us and taking upon Him the form of a Servant - God's Servant, man's Servant (Php 2:5, 6, 7-note, Php 2:8-note). We see Him willing to have no rights of His own, no home of His own, no possessions of His own, willing to let men revile Him and not revile again (1Pe 2:21, 22, 23-note), willing to let men tread on Him and not retaliate or defend Himself. Above all, we see Him broken (cp Mt 26:26) as He meekly goes to Calvary to become men's scapegoat by bearing their sins in His own body on the Tree. In a pathetic passage in a prophetic Psalm, He says,

"I am a **worm** (see note below) and no man" (Ps 22:6-note).

Those who have been in tropical lands tell us that there is a big difference between a snake and a worm, when you attempt to strike at them. The snake rears itself up and hisses and tries to strike back - a true picture of **self**. But a worm offers no resistance, it allows you to do what you like with it, kick it or squash it under your heel - a picture of true brokenness. And Jesus was willing to become just that for us - a worm and no man. And He did so, because that is what He saw us to be, worms having forfeited all rights by our sin, except to deserve hell. And He now calls us to take our rightful place as worms for Him and with Him. The whole Sermon on the Mount with its teaching of non-retaliation, love for enemies and selfless giving, assumes that that is our position. But only the vision of the Love that was willing to be broken for us can constrain us to be willing for that.

Lord, bend that proud and stiff necked I,  
Help me to bow the head and die;  
Beholding Him on Calvary,  
Who bowed His head for me.

But dying to self is not a thing we do once for all. There may be an initial dying when God first shows these things, but ever after it will be a constant dying, for only so can the Lord Jesus be revealed constantly through us (2Co 4:10-note). All day long the choice will be before us in a thousand ways. It will mean no plans, no time, no money, no pleasure of our own.

YIELDEDNESS TO GOD  
MEASURED BY  
YIELDEDNESS TO MAN!

It will mean a constant yielding to those around us, for our yieldedness to God is measured by our yieldedness to man. Every humiliation, everyone who tries and vexes us, is God's way of breaking us, so that there is a yet deeper channel in us for the Life of Christ. You see, the only life that pleases God and that can be victorious is His life - never our life, no matter how hard we try.

**But inasmuch as our self-centered life is the exact opposite of His, we can never be filled with His life unless we are prepared for God to bring our life constantly to death. And in that we must co-operate by our moral choice. ([The Calvary Road](#) now available free online)**

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**Note on Psalm 22:6 "Worm"** - On the cross the Lord Jesus called Himself a "Scarlet Worm". The Hebrew word is **towla** which was also the worm from which Israelites obtained red dye (a number of the 42 OT uses of towla [See [Hebrew lexicon entry](#)] are translated "crimson" or "scarlet" in the KJV). The female worm when laying her eggs, affixes her body to a wooden surface on which she will die after the young are born. The wood (think of the blood/crimson stained Cross, see 1Co 1:18, 1Pe 2:24-note, 2Co 5:21-note), her body, and the young are reddened with the death of the life-giving mother. In a similar image the Lord Jesus made "peace through the blood of His Cross" (Col 1:20-note). The permanent quality and deep red color of the dye makes it a striking figure in Isaiah 1:18-note

Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.

Jesus calls Himself a "SCARLET WORM"... for me He died... deep, deep mystery of redemption. Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, yea, even crushed like a helpless, defenseless worm.

**Thomas Watson** on the advantages of **affliction** that brings **contrition**...

**In affliction**, we often detect the sin which most easily besets us. This is the most difficult sin to find out, though the most in operation, on account of its blinding and deceiving nature. We have therefore cause to bless God for showing to us the accursed thing, and wherefore he contends with us.

**In affliction**, we obtain clear views of the insufficiency of all earthly things. A dark shadow is thrown over the smiling scenes of busy life. We discover the little value of those possessions, the attainment of which once appeared so desirable.

**In affliction**, we learn to estimate, above all treasures, an assured interest in Jesus Christ. The blessedness of the believer is then felt and acknowledged. His peace of mind, and hope of glory, the fruits of saving faith, are esteemed more precious than rubies.

**In affliction**, the promises of God's holy word are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. They are sacred cordials administered by infinite love, to revive and strengthen the drooping saint.

Thus, while the prosperous worldling in the midst of his abundance despises the "hidden manna;" the contrite believer in his heaviest trial can extract sweetness "from the wormwood and the gall." A Savior's love, experienced in the soul, renders all palatable, however distasteful to our nature. ([On Affliction](#))

**James Smith** writes that...

a broken heart for sin is one of God's choice blessings, and by it, He distinguishes His own people from all around. By the application of His law, and by the revelation of Christ—sin is discovered, hated, and mourned over (cp 2Sa 12:7, 13). The **law** for a time seems to harden the heart—but the **Gospel**, when attended by the **power of the Spirit**, breaks it. Then there is true repentance, godly sorrow for sin (2Co 7:9, 10), and deep heart-felt grief—because God has been dishonored, and the Lord Jesus tortured, and put to death. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." Repentance lies at the root of all experimental religion, and characterizes the true believer all the days of his life.

**Religion without repentance,  
abiding repentance, is false.**

Repentance begins at the Cross, and accompanies the Christian to the gates of the Celestial city. ([THE STIMULUS](#))

**Thomas Watson**...

How far from being godly are those who scarcely ever shed a tear for sin! If they lose a near relation—they weep. But though they are in danger of losing God and their souls—they do not weep. How few know what it is to be in an agony for sin, or what a broken heart means! ([The Godly Mans Picture](#))

If you wish to be thankful, get a heart deeply humbled with the sense of your own vileness. A broken heart is the best pipe to sound forth God's praise. He who studies his sins, wonders that he has anything, and that God should shine on such a dunghill: "I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man—but I was shown mercy!" (1 Timothy 1:13). How thankful Paul was! How he trumpeted forth free grace!

A proud man will never be thankful. He looks on all his mercies as either of his own procuring or deserving. If he has an estate, this he got by his wits and industry; not considering that scripture, "Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you power to become rich" (Dt. 8:18). Pride stops the current of gratitude. O

Christian, think of your unworthiness; see yourself as the least of saints, and the chief of sinners—and then you will be thankful.

**Thomas Brooks** discusses the

contrition or grief of heart for sins committed. Now this is called sometimes godly sorrow, 2Co 7:10; and sometimes a contrite spirit, Isaiah 66:2; and sometimes a broken and contrite heart, Ps 51:17; and sometimes the afflicting of our souls, Lv 16:29; and sometimes the humbling of the heart, 2Chr 7:14, Lam 3:20; and sometimes a mourning, Zech. 12:10; and sometimes a weeping, Mk 14:72. All repenting sinners are mourning sinners. David repents—and waters his couch with his tears, Psalm 6:6. Hezekiah repents—and humbles himself for the pride of his heart, 2Chr 32:26. Ephraim repents—and Ephraim bemoans himself and smites upon his thigh, and is even confounded, Jer. 31:18, 19. Mary Magdalene repents—and weeps, and washes Christ's feet with her tears, Luke 7:38. The Corinthians repented—and they were made sorrowful after a godly manner, 2Cor 7:9. Repentance in the Hebrew is called an irking of the soul; and in Greek, after-grief; and in the Latin, poenitentia; all which do import, that contrition or sorrow for sin is one part of true repentance. Oh the sighs, the groans, the sobs, the tears, which are to be found among repenting sinners, etc. Luther hit the mark when he said, "What are all the palaces of the world to a contrite heart; yes, heaven and earth, seeing penitential heart is the seat of divine majesty?"...

**Penitential confessions are commonly attended with grief in the heart, and with shame in the face.**

Psalm 38:18, "For I will declare my iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin. [Compare these scriptures together: Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 61:1, and 57:15; Job 16:20; Psalm 119:1, 36; Jer. 9:1, 31:18-19.] He tells you not only that he will declare his iniquity—but he tells you also, that he will be sorry for his sin. The same spirit you may find working in Jacob, Hosea 12:4; yes, he had "power over the angel and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him." The people of God, in the day of their confession, do not only say, We have sinned—but they also draw water and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition, 1 Sam. 7:6. Every sin is as a sword in a penitent man's bosom, and therefore while confessions are in his mouth—you shall mostly find either tears in his eyes or sorrow in his heart. **And indeed, true confession of sin is many times rather a voice of mourning than a voice of words.**

**Sometimes a penitent man's eyes will in some way tell what his tongue can in no way utter** Many times the penitent is better at weeping than he is at speaking: Psalm 39:12, "Hold not your peace at my tears." Tears have a voice as well as blood has—and are very prevalent orators with God: Psalm 6:8, "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors, and they never return from the throne of grace without an answer of grace. Tears are a kind of silent prayer, which though they say nothing—yet they obtain pardon; they prevail for mercy, and they carry the day with God, as you may see in that great and clear instance of Peter. He said nothing, he confessed nothing that we read of—but "went out and wept bitterly," and obtained mercy. ([Evangelical Repentance](#))

**J C Philpot** - Now, if a man lacks a broken heart, he lacks the main evidence of being a partaker of grace; for the leadings, teachings, and dealings of God all tend to this; they all tend to break a man's heart. If the Lord deals with him in conviction, it breaks his heart; breaks up the hard, impenetrable soil he formerly possessed. If the Lord manifests mercy, kindness, love, tender favor, it breaks the heart; for it softens, melts, and humbles it. That is one mark, then, of a "good" heart—to be broken and contrite.

**Despise** ([0959](#)) (**bazah** - see **word study** from a root word meaning to accord little worth to something) means to disdain or to hold in contempt. The English definition of **despise** means to look down on with contempt, repugnance or aversion and suggests an emotional response which ranges from strong dislike to loathing or to have the lowest opinion of something! **Antonyms** of **despise** (which would be applicable in the present context ) include to adore, to admire, to cherish, to esteem, to love. Indeed, God loves those whose heart is broken before Him. How different this is from the first use of **bazah** in Scripture where we see Esau "**despised** his birthright." (Ge 25:34)

**Bazah** is used by Isaiah in the famous description of the "**Suffering Messiah**"...

He was **despised** (Hebrew = **bazah**) and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3)

**Bazah** is used in a clearly Messianic psalm (prophesy of words that Jesus spoke)...

But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and **despised** (**bazah**) by the people. (Ps 22:6)

**Bazah** describes Judah's response to the words of warning God sent them through His prophets...



but (see 2Chr 36:15) they continually mocked the messengers of God, **despised** (Hebrew = bazah; Lxx = exoudenoo = to hold or treat as of no account - present tense describes this as their continual response to God's attempts to speak to their heart!) His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. (2Chronicles 36:16)

**Bazah** - 42x in the OT - Ge 25:34; Nu 15:31 (despise Word of the LORD); 1Sa 2:30 (despise God); 1Sa 10:27; 15:9; 17:42; 2Sa 6:16; 12:9, 10; 2Kgs 19:21; 1Chr 15:29; 2Chr 36:16; Neh 2:19; Esther 1:17; 3:6; Ps 15:4; 22:6, 24; 51:17; 69:33; 73:20; 102:17; 119:141; Pr 14:2; 15:20; 19:16; Eccl 9:16; Isa 37:22; 53:3; Jer 22:28; 49:15; Ezek 16:59; 17:16, 18, 19; 22:8; Da 11:21; Obad 1:2; Mal 1:6, 7, 12; 2:9. **NAS renders it** - careless(1), contempt(1), despicable(1), despise(5), despised(32), despises(2), disdained(1), disdained\*(1).

In Psalm 102 we see into the heart of God...

He has regarded the prayer of the **destitute** (poor, without money, etc; Lxx = tapeinos = humble, one brought low) and **has not despised** (bazah; Lxx = exoudenoo = treat as of no account, disdain, make light of) their prayer. (Ps 102:17)

**Spurgeon comments:** The Lord does not hear men because of the amount of money they possess or the breadth of the acres which they call their own, but in mercy listens most readily to the cry of the greatest need.

It is fascinating to observe the amazing supernatural character of God's grace - In 2Sa 12:9, 10 it was David who had despised the Word of God and the God of the Word and here in David's penitential psalm we see the same "despised" God not despising David's broken heart, for his is a heart that now clearly does not despise God! O God thank you for the transforming power of grace marinated with mercy and forgiveness in Christ. Amen.

### **The Heart Healed and Changed by Mercy**

William Cowper

Sin enslaved my many years,

And led me bound and blind;

Till at length a thousand fears

Came swarming o'er my mind.

"Where," said I, in deep distress,

"Will these sinful pleasures end?

How shall I secure my peace,

And make the Lord my friend?"

Friends and ministers said much

The gospel to enforce;

But my blindness still was such,

I chose a legal course:

Much I fasted, watch'd and strove,

Scarce would shew my face abroad,

Fear'd almost to speak or move,

A stranger still to God.

Thus afraid to trust His grace,

Long time did I rebel;

Till despairing of my case,

Down at His feet I fell:

**Then my stubborn heart He broke,**

**And subdued me to His sway;**

**By a simple word He spoke,**

**“Thy sins are done away.”**

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**Broken** (07665) (**shabar**) means to break in pieces, to shatter, to smash. The first biblical occurrence of shabar is in Ge 19:9, where the men of Sodom "pressed hard against Lot and came near to **break** the door." In another use, God says "I will also **break** down your pride of power" (Lev 26:19). In Ezekiel 6:9 God describes how He has "been hurt (broken) by their adulterous hearts which turned away from" Him "and by their eyes which played the harlot after their idols" (describing faithless Judah now in captivity in Babylon).

The **Lxx** translates **shabar** with **suntribo** which means to cause destruction of something by making it come apart (by shattering, smashing or crushing) and figuratively to be severely damaged psychologically and thus to be broken (as used in Lxx to describe the "brokenhearted" in Isa 61:1, Ps 34:18, Ps 147:3)

The broken person is one who responds to the convicting ministry of the Spirit by turning from self and unto God and manifesting this change of heart in their thoughts, words and deeds (repentance). The antithesis of a broken person is the self-centered, self-made, hard hearted individual who refuses to humble themselves and repent (see Saul's superficial facade of repentance - 1Sa 15:24, 30 resulting in God stripping him of his kingdom - Saul's words reveal that his heart was resistant to God's verdict in contrast to King David - 2Sa 12:13 who the Lord forgave). The fundamental distinction between a hard heart like Saul and a broken heart like David had is seen in how one reacts when confronted in their sin. The contrite heart chooses to be humbled and to repent. The contrite person trembles at God's Word (see Is 66:2 below) and instead of despising His Word (2Sa 12:9, 10), receives His Word (especially His Word of reproof), which is able not only to convict but to heal and make whole (Ps 147:3).

For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look, To him who is **humble** and **contrite** of spirit, and who **trembles** at My word. (Is 66:2).

The Messiah came for those who are broken in heart as prophesied in Isaiah and fulfilled in Luke...

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the **brokenhearted** (**Suntribo** from **sun** = together, with + **tribo** = break > crush completely), To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners (**This healing, liberty and freedom clearly being a result of the power of the proclamation and reception of the Glorious Gospel**); (Lk 61:1)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the **brokenhearted** (**Suntribo** from **sun** = together, with + **tribo** = break > crush completely), to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,<sup>19</sup> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Quoting the KJV - Lk 4:18, 19)

**ISBE** entry says that **brokenhearted** are...People who feel their spiritual bankruptcy and helplessness, and who long for the help and salvation of God. Such people are in the right condition to be met and blessed by God. Compare "of contrite spirit" (Ps 31:18; Isaiah 66:2). ([International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#))

**Allan Ross** writes that...In the Old Testament, anyone who sinned as David did had to receive a word from a priest or prophet indicating he was forgiven. Only then could the penitent person again take part in worship and make a peace offering. In the New Testament the word of forgiveness is forever written in God's Word—the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin (1Jn 1:7). **Yet even in the New Testament a believer must have a spirit broken of all self-assertion; he must acknowledge his need before God to find spiritual renewal and cleansing** (1Jn 1:9). ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#)) (Bolding added)

**Contrite** (01794) (**dakah**) means to crush, break in pieces, smash or crush down into pieces; to hammer or beat out, such as metal into thin pieces. **Dakah** is used figuratively in this passage to describe David as one who is crushed, beaten down, bruised emotionally and spiritually as is proper in one who is weighed down by one who senses his guilt and recognizes that his sin is clearly against a holy and loving God.

**Herbert Wolf** - This verb is a by-form of the verb dk', which also means "to crush," and of dūk "to pound, beat." It is used only in

Psalms, twice in the Niphal (Psalm 38:8 [H 9]; Psalm 51:17 [H 19]) and twice in the Piel (Psalm 44:19 [H 20]; Psalm 51:8 [H 10]). The form in Psalm 10:10 is disputed, though it is possibly a use of the Qal. Most versions render it "he crouches" (KJV ASV), although "he is crushed" is also plausible. The verb appears only in laments and is consistently used of one who is physically and emotionally crushed because of sin or the onslaught of an enemy. In Psalm 51:8 [H 10] and probably Psalm 38:8 [H 9], the psalmist speaks of his bones being broken because of involvement in sin. Psalm 51 refers to David's adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent conviction of sin that he experienced. In Psalm 51:17 [H 19] he notes with some consolation that God does not despise a broken and contrite ("crushed") heart. The same parallel (using dk') occurs in Psalm 34:18 [H 19]. In Psalm 74:21 "oppressed" is parallel to "the afflicted" and "needy." In Psalm 44:19 [H 20] the situation seems to refer to a military defeat in which the nation has been "crushed." No sin is mentioned in the entire psalm, and yet the land has been humiliated, and overrun with jackals (cf. Jeremiah 9:11). Proverbs 26:28 notes that a liar hates the people he crushes. ([TWOT](#))

**Baker** - A verb meaning to crush, to break in pieces; to crouch. It is most often used figuratively of persons crushed emotionally and spiritually by the wicked (Ps. 10:10; kjv, nasb, nkjv, crouches); of persons weighed down and broken by their guilt before the Lord (Ps. 38:8[9]) or seemingly under His judgment (Ps. 44:19[20]); of bones broken by the Lord's imposition of guilt for sins (Ps. 51:8[10]); of a broken spirit as an acceptable sacrifice to God (Ps. 51:17[19]). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

**THOUGHT** - Do we really see our sin that way? Do we understand that when we sin we sin against His love, the boundless, everlasting love of a Father and how this must surely grieve His heart! I seldom think this way when I am wantonly, willfully choosing selfishly to sin - I am focused on self not the Savior of my soul! Would God's Spirit give all of us a heightened sense of the utter stupidity and selfishness of sin the next time we are tempted, so that as we think upon that which is pure and lovely, etc, we might quickly return to our senses and resist the temptation and rest in God's goodness in Christ. Amen

Our English word **contrite** is derived from Latin *contrere* which means to grind or bruise, which is interesting when we see this as one's proper response to sin against a holy God. **Contrite** describes one's grieving and penitent for sin or shortcoming (a "euphemism" for sin). Those who have a **contrite** spirit weep over wrongdoing and express genuine sorrow for their sins (cp Mt 5:4; Lk 6:21; 2Co 7:10). A contrite heart is one in which the natural pride and self-sufficiency have been completely humbled by the consciousness of guilt.

In sum, true contrition and/or brokenness can come when we are reproved and made aware of our sin (Eg, even an evil king like Manasseh - 2Chr 33:10, 11, 12, 13). It can also come from an up close and personal encounter with God when we see Him high and lifted up as did Isaiah (Isa 6:1) responding with a "Woe is me for I am ruined" reaction! (Isa 6:5). Another way contrition comes about is when providential events beyond our control defeat the lie that we are in control of our lives and we come to our sense and realize we are "boxed in", cornered, with nowhere to go or to turn much like Job after his horrible tragedies (see Job 42:3, 4, 5 for the effects of his trials)

**Dakah** - 5x in the OT - .broken(1), contrite(1), crouches(1), crushed(2).

Psalm 10:10 He **crouches**, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones.

Psalm 38:8 I am benumbed and badly **crushed**; I groan because of the agitation of my heart.

Psalm 44:19 Yet You have **crushed** us in a place of jackals And covered us with the shadow of death.

Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have **broken** rejoice.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a **contrite** heart, O God, You will not despise.

**ARE YOU...  
HARDHEARTED  
or  
BROKENHEARTED?**

**HARDHEARTED**

**Pharaoh**

Defied God by steadfastly refusing to let His people leave Egypt, which brought ten plagues on Egypt and great loss of life (Ex. 7-14).

**BROKENHEARTED**

**Nebuchadnezzar**

Spent perhaps seven years living as a wild beast until he acknowledged the preeminence and sovereignty of God (Dan. 4-notes).

<p><b>The Israelites at Kadesh Barnea</b></p> <p>Rebelled against God's promises to help them take the Promised Land, for which they spent forty years dying in the wilderness (Nu 13-14).</p>	<p><b>Joshua and Caleb</b></p> <p>Demonstrated a "different spirit" by keeping faith in the Lord, for which they were rewarded with entry into Canaan (Nu 13:30; 14:6-9, 24, 30, 36-38).</p>
<p><b>Saul</b></p> <p>Repeatedly disobeyed, disregarded, and dishonored God, for which he was stripped of his kingdom and eventually lost his life (1Chr 10:13,14).</p>	<p><b>David</b></p> <p>Confessed his sins of adultery and murder, fasted, and prayed after being confronted by Nathan the prophet, after which God pardoned him (2Sa 12:1-25; Ps. 51).</p>
<p><b>Jesus' Disciples</b></p> <p>Were unable to understand the significance of the feeding of the 5, 000 because of their hardness of heart—a blindness that continued on a similar occasion not long after (Mark 6:33-52; 8:1-21).</p>	<p><b>The Hemorrhaging Woman</b></p> <p>Recognized Jesus' ability to heal and touched Him, believing that that was all she needed to do (Mark 5:25-34).</p>
<p><b>People Who Were Quick to Divorce</b></p> <p>Told by Jesus that the Law permitted divorce in Israel as an accommodation to the people's hardness of heart (Mark 10:2-12).</p>	<p><b>The Woman Caught in Adultery</b></p> <p>Told by Jesus that she was forgiven and urged to sin no more (John 8:1-11).</p>
<p><b>Jesus' Disciples</b></p> <p>Rebuked for their unwillingness to believe the report of the women about his resurrection because of their hardness of heart (Mark 16:14).</p>	<p><b>Mary Magdalene</b></p> <p>Heartbroken over the loss of her Lord, but rewarded with the first encounter with the risen Christ (John 20:1, 11-18).</p>
<p><b>The Jewish Council</b></p> <p>Rebuked by Stephen for being "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" in regard to God, as evidenced by their mistreatment of Jesus and His followers (Acts 7:51-53).</p>	<p><b>Cornelius</b></p> <p>Was devoted to God, as evidenced by fasting and praying, in response to which God sent Peter to tell him about the gospel (Acts 10)</p>

Adapted from [The Word In Life Study Bible](#), [Thomas Nelson Books](#) or [Logos](#)

**Brokenhearted Father** - Among the first glimpses we get of our God is that of a Seeker: "Adam ... Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9). In commenting upon this question to his Bible class, a teacher said, "You can never be a preacher if you read it as though God were a policeman. Read it as though God were a brokenhearted Father looking for a lost child!" (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times)

One of Spurgeon's students went into a pulpit with every expression of confidence but he had an extremely difficult time. He came down distressed, almost brokenhearted, and he went to Spurgeon about it. The words of Spurgeon to him were these, "If you had gone up as you came down, you would have come down as you went up." (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times)

**The Wonder of Grace** - When I was a young boy, a few of my friends had fathers who led their families in daily Bible reading and never missed a church service. But I also knew that some of them were proud, tyrants at home, ruthless in their business dealings, and heartless toward people in need. Although I was young, I knew this kind of hypocrisy did not please God.

I was grateful that my father and several other men I knew modeled true faith and humility. They were quick to admit their wrongs and treated others with compassion. They obviously saw themselves as unworthy recipients of God's wonderful grace.

In Psalm 51, David expressed his deep sense of guilt and his desperate need for God's forgiveness and cleansing. As he grieved over his sin, he came to the Lord with the sacrifice of "a broken and a contrite heart" (Ps 51:17). When David thought about God's love, mercy, and grace, he was filled with gratitude and praise.

If we recognize the seriousness of our sin, we too will come to the Lord with the sacrifice of "a broken and a contrite heart." As we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, taking the full punishment for all our sins, then we will be overwhelmed with the wonder

of grace. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord is drawn to broken hearts  
And saves each sin-sick, contrite soul.  
With healing touch His grace applies,  
And makes the wounded spirit whole.  
—Bosch

### **Spiritual wholeness begins with a broken heart.**

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**Secrets Exposed** - For many years, Lake Okeechobee hid its secrets in thick waters and layers of muck. But in 2007, drought shrank the Florida lake to its lowest level since officials began keeping records in 1932, unveiling hundreds of years of history. Raking through the bottom of the lake, archaeologists found artifacts, pottery, human bone fragments, and even boats.

After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and planned the death of her husband, Uriah, he covered his sins by denying them and not confessing them. He probably went many months conducting business as usual, even performing religious duties. As long as David cloaked his sinful secrets, he experienced God's crushing finger of conviction and his strength evaporated like water in the heat of summer (Ps. 32:3, 4).

When the prophet Nathan confronted David about his sin, God's conviction was so great that David confessed his sins to God and turned away from them. Immediately the Lord forgave David and he experienced His mercy and grace (2Sa 12:13; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51:17).

Let's be careful not to hide our sin. When we uncover our sins by confessing them to God, we are covered with His forgiveness. —  
by Marvin Williams

Lord, help me to expose my sin,  
Those secret faults that lurk within;  
I would confess them all to Thee;  
Transparent I would always be.  
—D. De Haan

Give God what He desires most—  
a broken and repentant heart.

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**Sacrifice** - In the agony of Psalm 51, David seems to contradict himself. He exclaims, "You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering" (Ps 51:16). Then, two verses later, he says, "You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering" (Ps 51:19). Does God want our sacrifices or not?

Sacrifices resemble the flowers a husband gives to his wife after a heated argument. The wife doesn't need the flowers. They are valuable to her only if they accurately represent her husband's feelings. If she thinks they are merely a ritual and do not symbolize his regret, the flowers make the divide between them worse.

God didn't need the animals offered to Him in sacrifice. Hebrews says, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (He 10:4). These sacrifices pointed to the once-for-all payment Jesus would make with His own blood when He died for our sins.

What mattered was the attitude of those making the sacrifices. If the offerings were without repentance, the ritual was a mockery. That's why David wrote, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).— by Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### **For Further Study**

Learn more about David's sin and his return to God.  
Read David & Manasseh: Overcoming Failure

**Repentance is sorrow for the deed,  
not for getting caught.**

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**Legacy Of Repentance** - All nations have heroes, but Israel may be alone in making epic literature about its greatest hero's failings (Ps. 51). This eloquent psalm shows that Israel ultimately remembered David more for his devotion to God than for his political achievements.

Step-by-step, the psalm takes the reader through the stages of repentance. It describes the constant mental replays, the gnawing guilt, the shame, and finally the hope of a new beginning that springs from true repentance.

In a remarkable way, Psalm 51 reveals the true nature of sin as a broken relationship with God. David cries out, "Against You, You only, have I sinned" (v.4). He sees that the sacrifices God wants are "a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart" (v.17). Those, David has.

In his prayer, David looks for possible good that might come out of his tragedy and sees a glimmer of light. Perhaps by reading this story of sin others might avoid the same pitfalls, or by reading his confession they might gain hope in forgiveness. David's prayer is answered and becomes his greatest legacy as king. The best king of Israel has fallen the farthest. But neither he, nor anyone, can fall beyond the reach of God's love and forgiveness. - Philip Yancey

How blest is he whose trespass  
Has freely been forgiven,  
Whose sin is wholly covered  
Before the sight of heaven.  
—Psalter

**Repentance is the soil  
in which forgiveness flourishes.**

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**Wasted Worship** - If you are able to go to church on Sunday, you probably will. For most Christians, it's almost automatic—and rightly so. But is it possible that our efforts to go to church for worship might be **wasted**? Could it all be **in vain**? Yes. Before we even enter the church, the **worth of our worship** can be reduced to nothing because of **the way we've lived during the week**.

In Amos 5, the Lord had some harsh words for those who attempted to worship Him while bringing with them the guilt of an ungodly lifestyle. His people were constantly angering Him by following false gods (Amos 5:26). When they assembled to worship the Lord through sacrifices and songs, God despised their hypocrisy.

In Isaiah 1, God instructed His people that before they could worship Him, they were to **cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice**" (Isa 1:16, 17-note).

What a challenge to us! Before we worship God, we are to put things in order by **confessing our sins, seeking His forgiveness**, and then serving Him. Our daily walk with God and our obedience to His commands are the elements that prepare us for church. Anything less will lead to **wasted worship**. — by Dave Branon

O holy God, undone by guilt depressing  
We come to Thee our every sin confessing;  
Grant us, we pray, Thy cleansing and Thy blessing;  
We worship Thee, O God!  
—Frost

**Worship that pleases God  
comes from an obedient heart.**

**Psalm 51:18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.**

BGT Psalm 50:20 γ θυνον κ ρ ι ε ν τ ε δοκ σου τ ν Σ ι ω ν κ α ο κ ο δομηθ τ ω τ τε χ η Ιερουσαλημ

LXE Psalm 51:18 Do good, O Lord, to Zion in thy good pleasure; and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.

KJV Psalm 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

NET Psalm 51:18 Because you favor Zion, do what is good for her! Fortify the walls of Jerusalem!

CSB Psalm 51:18 In Your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper; build the walls of Jerusalem.

ESV Psalm 51:18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;  
 NIV Psalm 51:18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem.  
 NLT Psalm 51:18 Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
 NRS Psalm 51:18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,  
 NJB Psalm 51:18 In your graciousness do good to Zion, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
 NAB Psalm 51:20 Make Zion prosper in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
 YLT Psalm 51:18 Do good in Thy good pleasure with Zion, Thou dost build the walls of Jerusalem.  
 GWN Psalm 51:18 Favor Zion with your goodness. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
 BBE Psalm 51:18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure, building up the walls of Jerusalem.  
 RSV Psalm 51:18 Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,  
 NKJ Psalm 51:18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.  
 ASV Psalm 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.  
 DBY Psalm 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem.  
 BHT Psalm 51:20 hêṯîḇâ bircônkâ ´et-ciyôn Tibnè Hômot yûrûšälâ'im  
 NIRV Psalm 51:18 May you be pleased to give Zion success. Build up the walls of Jerusalem.  
 RWB Psalm 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.  
 WEB Psalm 51:18 Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

- **Do:** Ps 25:22 102:16 122:6-9 137:5,6 Isa 62:1,6,7 Jer 51:50 2Co 11:28,29
- **Your:** Lk 12:32 Eph 1:5,9 Php 2:13 2Th 1:11
- **build:** Ne 2:17 Isa 58:12 Da 9:25 Mic 7:11 Zec 2:5)

**By Your favor do good to Zion - Spurgeon** - Let blessings according to Thy wont be poured upon Thy holy hill and chosen city. Zion was David's favorite spot, whereon he had hoped to erect a temple. The ruling passion is so strong on him, that when he has discharged his conscience he must have a word for Zion. He felt he had hindered the project of honoring the Lord there as he desired, but he prayed God still to let the place of His ark be glorious, and to establish His worship and His worshipping people.

**MacDonald** - And now, Lord, I want to pray for Your dear people as well as for myself. Be pleased to shower them with good things. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. My sins have doubtless hindered the progress of Your work. I have brought reproach upon Your name. Now may Your cause move forward without hindrance.

**Build the walls of Jerusalem - Spurgeon** - Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. This had been one of David's schemes, to wall in the holy city, and he desires to see it completed; but we believe he had a more spiritual meaning, and prayed for the prosperity of the Lord's cause and people. He had done mischief by his sin, and had, as it were, pulled down her walls; he, therefore, implores the Lord to undo the evil, and establish His people. God can make His cause to prosper, and in answer to prayer He will do so. Without His building we labour in vain; therefore are we the more instant and constant in prayer. There is surely no grace in us if we do not feel for the people of God, and take a lasting interest in their welfare.

**By Your favor** - The Hebrew word **ratson** speaks of pleasure, delight, favor, goodwill. Lxx uses **eudokia** which describes the condition of being kindly disposed. It is a strong emotion in favor of something. David appeals to the goodness of God before he presents his request -- a good pattern in prayer.

**Thomas Alexander** - Whatever we seek must ever be sought under this restriction, **Thy good pleasure**. Build Thou, but do it in Thine own wise time, in Thine own good way. Build Thou the walls of separation that divide us from the world; let them be in it, not of it; keep them from its evil. Build Thou the walls that bind, that unite Thy people into one city, under one polity, that they all may be one. Build thou, and raze Thou; raze all the inner walls that divide Thy people from Thy people; hasten that day when, as there is but one Shepherd, so shall there be but one sheepfold. Amen

**Do good to Zion** - In Hebrew yatab is an imperative or command. Lxx uses agathuno in the aorist imperative which means to do good to or do well toward.

Notice how David passes from prayer for himself to prayer for others.

Let us in this day of great global groaning over the great City of God frequently intercede and...

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you."

May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces." (Ps 122:6,7)

David in sin had torn down and now in repentance and restoration prays for building up! David pleaded for forgiveness and once received now prays for Jerusalem. The implication is that David recognized the effects that his sins had on his own nation. Sin almost always has much further reaching consequences than ever imagine. When we sin, the sin so deceives us that it makes us think "If anyone gets hurt, it will only be me!" That is the deadly lie of sin. Sin is like a stone thrown into a pond producing ripples of effect far beyond (time and space) the original commission of the sin. Do not be deceived, beloved! Sin can (and will) impact our families, our church, our community, and our nation. Because of David's sin, he was concerned for and interceded on behalf of his nation Israel, as represented by Zion, the chief city and place of God's Temple.

**Wiersbe** - David in his sin had been tearing down, not building up. He had given opportunity to the enemies of Israel to blaspheme God. The word got out. Soon everyone knew what David had done. So he says, "O God, when I was sinning, I was tearing down. I was not pleasing You. Now I want to please You. And because I'm pleasing You, I will be building up. And the walls of Jerusalem, walls of protection, will be strong." Are you tearing down or building up?

**Boice** - As for the walls being built up, two views are possible. David may be speaking metaphorically, suggesting that the strength of Jerusalem is in the righteousness of its people and that this had been weakened because of his sin and now needed to be restored. Or he may be speaking literally, since the walls, buildings, and temple were not completed until the days of Solomon (see 1Kings 3:1). In this case, David would be praying that this important work might not be hindered by his sin and might continue. Let us remember that everything we do affects other people, whether for good or evil. It is not true that we can sin "as long as it does not hurt anyone," because sin always hurts someone. But it is also true that those who confess their sin find forgiveness and renewal, teach others the ways of God, and become a blessing.

**Charles Horne** - The king forgets not to ask mercy for his people, as well as for himself; that so neither his own nor their sins might prevent either the building and flourishing of the earthly Jerusalem. (Psalm 51 Commentary)

In 2 Samuel Nathan describes the effect of David's sin on his nation (and his own son)...

However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die. (2Sa 12:14+)

And so in this passage we see David interceding for his nation and for God's blessing.

**THOUGHT** - Intercession is another ministry in which every restored sinner can and should engage! Who better to feel compassion for a brother or sister engaged and entrapped in some sin of which we have confessed, repented and been forgiven! When you get your life right with the Lord, then you begin to have concern for others.

Sin may be **private** but it always has "**public**" consequences as David experienced (cp 2Sa 12:12)...One needs only to look at the recent scandals involving famous evangelical leaders to see the effects on others of "private" sins. Once they are discovered—and the Bible tells us to "be sure your sin will find you out" (Nu 32:23)—families, friends, congregations, and the Christian community at large will be harmed. Worse still, the cause of Christ will be damaged as unbelievers scoff and sneer at us and blaspheme His name (cp "enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" 2Sa 12:14). It may seem that people sin without visible consequences, but what is secret will one day be made manifest. "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open" (Lk 8:17).

**THOUGHT**- Can you honestly say that there is no one that would then be affected by your secret sins if they should become known?

Sin that is kept secret produces guilt, and guilt has a way of changing us. Others see those changes and are affected by them. Perhaps a spouse, for instance, is unaware of her husband's addiction to pornography, but his addiction leads to a guilty secretiveness and change in attitude toward her as his sexual partner. She perceives that change and speculates on the possible cause—he finds her unattractive, he doesn't love her any more, or he's having an affair. While none of these things are true, the consequences of his "private" sin are potentially devastating to her, their marriage, and their family, even if his secret is never discovered. ([How does my personal, private sin affect others](#))

**Psalm 51:19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will**



BGT Psalm 50:21 τ τε ε δοκ σεις θυσ αν δικαιοσ νης ναφορ ν κα λοκαυτ ματα τ τε νο σουσιν π τ θυσιαστ ρι ν σου μ σχους

LXE Psalm 51:19 Then shalt thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, offering, and whole-burnt-sacrifices: then shall they offer calves upon thine altar.

KJV Psalm 51:19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

NET Psalm 51:19 Then you will accept the proper sacrifices, burnt sacrifices and whole offerings; then bulls will be sacrificed on your altar.

CSB Psalm 51:19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

ESV Psalm 51:19 then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

NIV Psalm 51:19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

NLT Psalm 51:19 Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit-- with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

NRS Psalm 51:19 then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

NJB Psalm 51:19 Then you will delight in upright sacrifices,-burnt offerings and whole oblations -- and young bulls will be offered on your altar.

NAB Psalm 51:21 Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifice, burnt offerings and holocausts; then bullocks will be offered on your altar.

YLT Psalm 51:19 Then Thou desirest sacrifices of righteousness, Burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering, Then they offer bullocks on thine altar!

GWN Psalm 51:19 Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit- with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings. Young bulls will be offered on your altar.

BBE Psalm 51:19 Then you will have delight in the offerings of righteousness, in burned offerings and offerings of beasts; then they will make offerings of oxen on your altar.

RSV Psalm 51:19 then wilt thou delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on thy altar.

NKJ Psalm 51:19 Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

ASV Psalm 51:19 Then will thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, In burnt-offering and in whole burnt-offering: Then will they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

DBY Psalm 51:19 Then shalt thou have sacrifices of righteousness, burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering; then shall they offer up bullocks upon thine altar.

BHT Psalm 51:21 ´áz TaHPöc zibHê-cedeq `ôlà wükälîl ´áz ya`álú `al-mizBaHákâ pârîm

NIRV Psalm 51:19 Then holy sacrifices will be offered in the right way. Whole burnt offerings will bring delight to you. And bulls will be offered on your altar.

RWB Psalm 51:19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bulls upon thy altar.

WEB Psalm 51:19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thy altar.

- **sacrifices:** Ps 4:5 Mal 3:3 Ro 12:1

## OFFER SACRIFICES WITH RIGHT HEART ATTITUDE

**Then You will delight** ([chaphets](#); Lxx - [eudokeo](#)) **in righteous** ([tsedeq](#); Lxx - [dikaiousune](#)) **sacrifices** - Psalm 4:5 says "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the LORD." **Righteous sacrifices** come from a righteous heart and life, flowing forth from the imputed righteousness God bestows on His children. We have no innate, intrinsic righteousness to offer. What we offer must be from right motives, not to earn or merit but to praise, worship and glorify the only Righteous One.

In a parallel thought in Psalm 50:14 we read "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High." **Spurgeon** explains "No longer look at your sacrifices as in themselves gifts pleasing to me, but present them as the tributes of your gratitude; it is then that I will accept them, but not while your poor souls have no love and no thankfulness to offer me. The sacrifices, as considered in themselves, are contemned, but the internal emotions of love consequent upon a remembrance of divine goodness, are commended as the substance, meaning, and soul of sacrifice. Even when the legal ceremonials were not abolished, this was true, and when they came to an end, this truth was more than ever made manifest. Not for want of bullocks on the altar was Israel blamed, but for want of thankful adoration before the Lord. She excelled in the visible, but in the inward grace, which is the one thing needful, she sadly failed. Too many in these days are in the same condemnation. Let the sacrifice be really presented to the God **Who seeth the heart**, pay to him the love you promised, the service you covenanted to render, the loyalty of heart you have vowed to maintain. **O for grace to do this!** O that we may be graciously enabled to love God, and live up to our profession! To be, indeed, the servants of the Lord, the lovers of Jesus, this is our main concern. What avails our baptism, to what end our gatherings at the Lord's table, to what purpose our solemn assemblies, if we have not the fear of the Lord, and vital godliness reigning within our bosoms?

**In burnt offering** ([olah](#); Lxx - [holokautoma](#)) **and whole burnt offering** - These offerings speak of our complete dedication to God which will result in offerings that please God's heart. This truth recalls Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:1+ "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

**Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar Spurgeon** - In those days of joyful prosperity thy saints shall present in great abundance the richest and holiest thank offerings to thee, and thou shalt be pleased to accept them. A saved soul expects to see its prayers answered in a revived church, and then is assured that God will be greatly glorified. Though we bring no more sacrifices for sin, yet as priests unto God our solemn praises and votive gifts are thank offerings acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We bring not the Lord our least things—our doves and pigeons; but we present him with our best possessions—our bullocks. We are glad that in this present time we are able to fulfill in person the declaration of this verse: we also, forecasting the future, wait for days of the divine presence, when the church of God, with unspeakable joy, shall offer gifts upon the altar of God, which will far eclipse anything beheld in these less enthusiastic days. Hasten it, O Lord.

J Vernon McGee - The Lord Jesus went to dinner in the home of a Pharisee. A woman who had been saved came in there from the street. But Simon the Pharisee only knew her in the past, and he would have passed by on the other side rather than meet her on the street. But according to the custom of the day, when he had guests she had a right to come into his house and even stand and observe. She got to the place where our Lord was reclining (they used couches rather than chairs in that day), and she stood at His feet behind Him, weeping. She washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with ointment. Simon, His host, became critical. He began to find fault. And our Lord really rebuked him. He said, "When I came here you didn't even furnish me water to wash my feet. You didn't even extend to me the common courtesies. But this woman has not ceased to wash my feet with her tears. She's been forgiven. You have not" (Luke 7:44, paraphrase mine). Then He said to him, "...Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47). We think we are all right. My friend, God cannot clear the guilty, and He says you and I are guilty before Him. The only way he could save you and me is to give His Son to die. For the worst sinner in the world that is all that is needed. And this is the way you and I are saved also. "...To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." To whom much is forgiven -- oh, he loves much.

**THOUGHT** What is the measure of your love? Well, it is your estimate of your own sins. Is it possible that you do not confess your sins? When was the last time you wept over your sins? When was the last time you cried out in the night because of your failures? Thank God, there is forgiveness with Him. But there needs to be confession on our part.

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**Righteous** ([06664](#))([tsedeq](#) from root "[sdq](#)" - to be straight, norm) the basic idea is that which conforms to an ethical or moral standard. [Tsedeq](#) is noun meaning a right relation to an ethical or legal standard.

**W E Vine** - Exegetes have spilled much ink in an attempt to understand contextually the words *šedeq* and *šedāqâ*. The conclusions of the researchers indicate a twofold significance. On the one hand, the relationships among people and of a man to his God can be described as *šedeq*, supposing the parties are faithful to each other's expectations. It is a relational word. In Jacob's proposal to Laban, Jacob used the word *Šedāqâ* to indicate the relationship. The kjv gives the following translation of *Šedāqâ*: "So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face..." (Gen. 30:33). The nasb gives the word "righteousness" in a marginal note, but prefers the word "honesty" in the text itself. The neb reads "fair offer" instead. Finally, the niv has: "And my honesty [*Šedāqâ*] will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me." On the other hand, "righteousness" as an abstract or as the legal status of a relationship is also present in the Old Testament. The locus classicus is Gen. 15:6: "... And he [the Lord] counted it to him [Abraham] for righteousness." Regrettably, in a discussion of the dynamic versus the static sense of the word, one or the other wins out, though both elements are present. The books of Psalms and of the prophets particularly use the sense of "righteousness" as a state; cf. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isa. 51:1); and "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust" (Isa. 51:5). The neb exhibits this tension between dynamic and static in the translation of *šedeq*: "My victory [instead of righteousness] is near, my deliverance has gone forth and my arm shall rule the nations; for me coasts and islands shall wait and they shall look to me for protection" (Isa. 51:5). Thus, in the discussion of the two nouns below, the meaning lie between the dynamic and the static.

**Gilbrant** - The idea of "what is right" is seen in Prov. 1:3, as one of the words for what the study of the biblical proverbs should enable a person to be. It refers to God's standard of right conduct. It can refer to justice (Job 8:3). The Hebrew language uses nouns like this in constructions where we would translate them as adjectives or adverbs. Leviticus 19:36 calls for "weights of righteousness" or "just weights." Deuteronomy 16:18 says the judges are to judge the people with a judgment of righteousness or a "just judgment." Then, in v. 20, God commands them to follow "that which is altogether just," which is an emphatic way to call for acting justly or making a strong effort to do what is truly right. Psalm 96:13 says the Lord judges the world "with righteousness." All God's decisions and actions in governing the world are according to his holy character, which is revealed in the righteous standards of his Word (Ps. 48:10; Isa. 11:5; 42:21). When God intervenes in the world in just decisions (HED #5122) in dealing with sin, "The world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

People may refer to their own righteousness, meaning their innocence or integrity (Job 6:29; Ps. 18:20-24). Living God's way, according to his standards, is referred to in Ps. 23:3. It is the opposite of wickedness (Ecc. 7:15), as well as of sin and evil (Ezek. 3:20).

David called on the "God of my righteousness" (Ps. 4:1) or the God "who vindicates me" (BDB, 841). Righteousness can refer to a gift of acceptance or new status with God (Isa. 62:2; cf. HED #6930). In many passages, it refers to both the gift of right relationship with God and the godly lifestyle that flows out of it (Ps. 118:19; Isa. 1:26; 61:3; Dan. 9:24).

The righteousness of God may be summarized as his holy character in action, in specific application, to deal with sin and accomplish his salvation purpose. Thus, all He does flows from his character and purposes (Isa. 42:6, 21). These righteous purposes are at work behind history (Isa. 41:2). All of his glorious reputation can be referred to as his righteousness (Ps. 97:6). He deals with sin both positively and negatively. Positively, God cares about people and provides salvation. He intervenes on the behalf of his people, those who trust in Him. Righteousness is often parallel to God's salvation (Ps. 35:28; Isa. 45:8; 51:5; 62:1). Ultimately, the Lord provides the substitute for the punishment of everyone's unrighteousness (later this provision is revealed as his Son). He offers the gift of righteousness or right standing with Him, a restored relationship by grace through faith in this coming Savior. Jeremiah 23:6 calls the Davidic Messiah "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." God also deals with sin negatively, punishing all who cling to it and do not repent and accept his gift (Jer. 11:20). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Tsedeq - 112v** - accurate(1), fairly(1), just(10), just cause(1), justice(3), righteous(15), righteously(6), righteousness(76), righteousness'(1), rightly(1), vindication(1), what is right(3). Lev. 19:15; Lev. 19:36; Deut. 1:16; Deut. 16:18; Deut. 16:20; Deut. 25:15; Deut. 33:19; Job 6:29; Job 8:3; Job 8:6; Job 29:14; Job 31:6; Job 35:2; Job 36:3; Ps. 4:1; Ps. 4:5; Ps. 7:8; Ps. 7:17; Ps. 9:4; Ps. 9:8; Ps. 15:2; Ps. 17:1; Ps. 17:15; Ps. 18:20; Ps. 18:24; Ps. 23:3; Ps. 35:24; Ps. 35:27; Ps. 35:28; Ps. 37:6; Ps. 40:9; Ps. 45:4; Ps. 45:7; Ps. 48:10; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 51:19; Ps. 52:3; Ps. 58:1; Ps. 65:5; Ps. 72:2; Ps. 85:10; Ps. 85:11; Ps. 85:13; Ps. 89:14; Ps. 94:15; Ps. 96:13; Ps. 97:2; Ps. 97:6; Ps. 98:9; Ps. 118:19; Ps. 119:7; Ps. 119:62; Ps. 119:75; Ps. 119:106; Ps. 119:121; Ps. 119:123; Ps. 119:138; Ps. 119:142; Ps. 119:144; Ps. 119:160; Ps. 119:164; Ps. 119:172; Ps. 132:9; Prov. 1:3; Prov. 2:9; Prov. 8:8; Prov. 8:15; Prov. 8:16; Prov. 12:17; Prov. 16:13; Prov. 25:5; Prov. 31:9; Eccl. 3:16; Eccl. 5:8; Eccl. 7:15; Isa. 1:21; Isa. 1:26; Isa. 11:4; Isa. 11:5; Isa. 16:5; Isa. 26:9; Isa. 26:10; Isa. 32:1; Isa. 41:2; Isa. 41:10; Isa. 42:6; Isa. 42:21; Isa. 45:8; Isa. 45:13; Isa. 45:19; Isa. 51:1; Isa. 51:5; Isa. 51:7; Isa. 58:2; Isa. 58:8; Isa. 59:4; Isa. 61:3; Isa. 62:1; Isa. 62:2; Isa. 64:5; Jer. 11:20; Jer. 22:13; Jer. 23:6; Jer.

31:23; Jer. 33:16; Jer. 50:7; Ezek. 3:20; Ezek. 45:10; Dan. 9:24; Hos. 2:19; Hos. 10:12; Zeph. 2:3